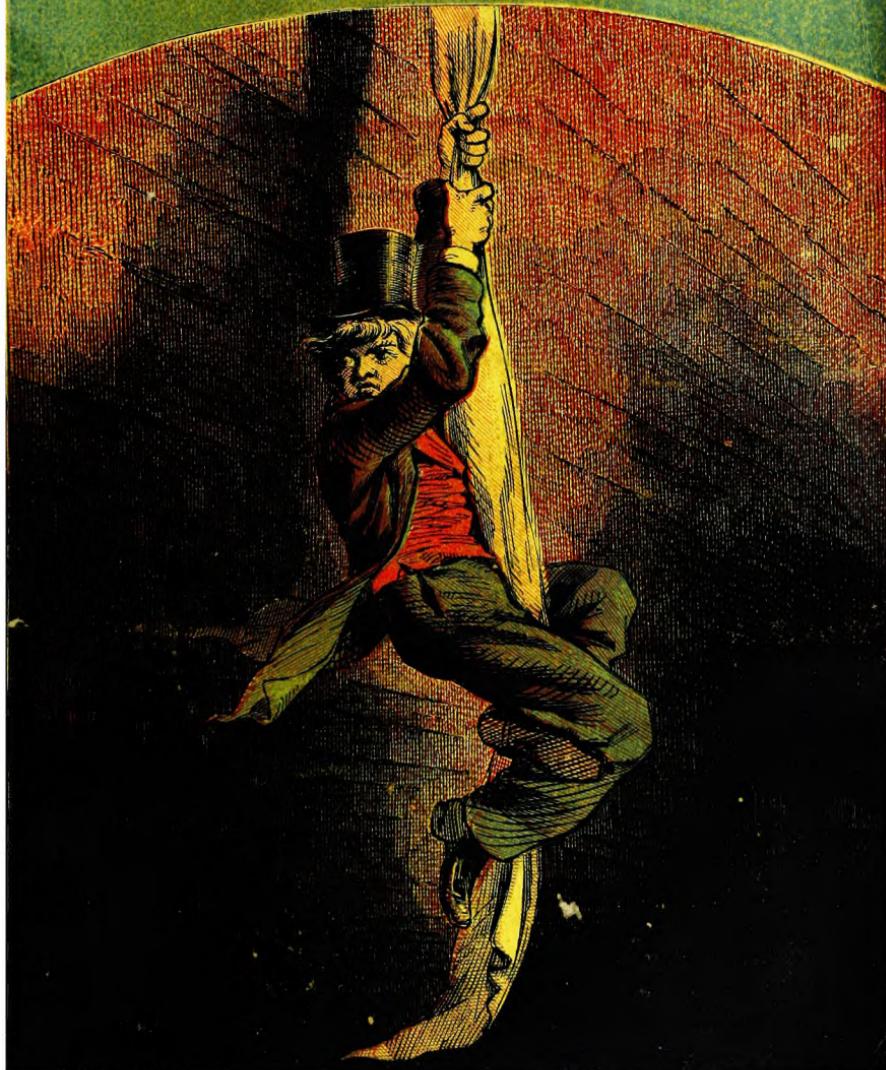


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CLEVER CRIMINALS;

OR,

Recollections of Botany Bay.

BY

JOHN LANG,

AUTHOR OF "TOO CLEVER BY HALF;" "TOO MUCH ALIKE;" "FORGER'S WIFE;"
"SECRET POLICE;" "MY FRIEND'S WIFE;" "CAPTAIN MACDONALD, OR THE
BAILIFFS OUTWITTED," ETC., ETC., ETC.



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AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

THE greater number of these stories have already appeared in "Household Words." The remainder were contributed to the "Welcome Guest." It behoves me to inform the English reader that, although the entire contents of this volume are founded upon truth, the names, dates, and localities have been so altered that to all intents and purposes they form merely a work of fiction. My object in making such alterations was to spare the feelings of the surviving relations of the various persons alluded to in my narratives respectively.

To my readers in Australia (the land of my birth), I desire to say that I do not hold myself responsible for the sentiments of the various persons whom I have introduced as "characters;" and that when I have spoken of the colony as "Botany Bay," and the large land and stock-holders of former times as the "lords" thereof, it was not my intention to be either sarcastic or insulting. An absence of nearly twenty years from the colony (partly in India and partly in Europe) has in no way lessened my regard for the land where the days of my boyhood were spent, and where I yet hope to end my life; and I would here desire to express that it afforded me great joy to find that the prophecy in which I indulged at the public meeting at the Sydney College, in 1842, when I inconsistently

seconded Mr. W. C. Wentworth's resolution, that the Crown be petitioned to grant the colony a representative assembly, was not fulfilled, but falsified. I was then a very young (and perhaps a silly and selfish) man, when I propounded in public that the colony was not ripe for any government, save that of a purely Crown government; and the severe handling I received from the entire press of the colony was no doubt well merited; for assuredly I was not justified in agreeing to second so important a resolution, and then express such strong doubts as to the advisability of its being carried into effect. The unpopularity that I incurred during the few months that I remained in the colony after my speech at the Sydney College, was, I trust, regarded as a sufficient punishment for that "youthful indiscretion" on my part.

JOHN LANG.

London.

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CLEVER CRIMINALS.

I.

THE GHOST UPON THE RAIL.

CHAPTER I.

It was a winter's night—an Australian winter's night—in the middle of July, when two wealthy farmers, in the district of Penrith, New South Wales, sat over the fire of a public-house, which was about a mile distant from their homes. The name of the one was John Fisher, and of the other Edward Smith. Both of these farmers had been transported to the colony; had served their time; bought land; cultivated it; and prospered. Fisher had the reputation of being possessed of a considerable sum in ready money; and it was well known that he was the mortgagee of several houses in the town of Sydney, besides being the owner of a farm of three hundred acres, which was very productive, and on which he lived. Smith also was in good circumstances; arising out of his own exertions on his farm; but, unlike his neighbour, he had not put by much money.

"Why don't you go home, John, and see your friends and relations?" asked Smith; "you be now very warm in the pocket; and, mark my words, they would be very glad to see you."

"I don't know about that, friend," replied Fisher. "When I got into trouble, it was the breaking of the heart of my old father and mother; and none of my brothers and sisters—in all seven of 'em—have ever answered one of my letters."

"You did not tell 'em you were a rich man, did you?"

"No; but I don't think they would heed that much, lad; for though they are far from wealthy, as small farmers, they are well to do in the world, and in a very respectable position in the country. I have often thought that if I was to go back, they would be sorry to see me, even if I carried with me 100,000*l.*, earned by one who had been a convict."

"Bless your innocent heart! you don't know human natur' as I do. Money does a deal—depend on't. Besides, who is to know anything about you, except your own family? and they would never go and hint that you had been unfortunate. Why how many years ago is it?"

"Let me see. I was then eighteen, and I am now forty-six—twenty-eight years ago. When I threw that stone at that man, I little thought it would hit him, much less kill him; and that I should be sent here for manslaughter. But so it was."

"Why I recommend you, John, to go home is, because you are always talking of home and your relations. As for the farm, I'd manage that for you while you are away."

"Thank you, Ned. I'll think about it."

Presently the landlord entered the room, and Smith, addressing him, said, "What think you, Mr. Dean? here is Mr. Fisher going home to England, to have a look at his friends and relations."

"Is that true, Mr. Fisher?" said the landlord.

"Oh, yes," was Fisher's reply, after finishing his glass of punch, and knocking the ashes out of his pipe.

"And *when* do you think of going?" said the landlord.

"That'll depend," replied Fisher, smiling. "When I'm gone you will hear of it, not before; and neighbour Smith here, who is to manage the farm during my absence, will come and pay you any little score I may leave behind."

"But I hope you will come and say good-bye," said the landlord.

"Oh, of course," said Fisher, laughing. "If I don't, depend upon it you will know the reason why."

After a brief while the two farmers took their departure. Their farms adjoined each other, and they were always on the very best of terms.

About six weeks after the conversation above given, Smith called one morning at the public-house, informed the landlord that Fisher had gone, and offered to pay any little sum that he owed. There was a small score against him; and while taking the money the landlord remarked that he was sorry Mr. Fisher had not kept his word, and come to bid him "good-bye." Mr. Smith explained that Fisher had very good reasons for having his departure kept a secret until after he had left the colony; not that he wanted to defraud anybody, far from it, he added; and then darkly hinted that one of Mr. Fisher's principal reasons for going off so stealthily was to prevent being annoyed by a woman who wanted him to marry her.

"Ah! I see," said the landlord; "and that's what he must have meant that night when he said, '*if I don't, you'll hear the reason why.*'"

"I feel the loss of his society very much," said Smith, "for when we did not come here together to spend our evening, he would come to my house, or I would go to his, to play cards, smoke a pipe, and drink a glass of grog. Having taken charge of all his affairs, under a power of attorney, I have gone to live at his place, and left my overseer in charge of my own place. When he comes back, in the course of a couple of years, *I am* going home to England, and he will do for me what I am now doing for him. Between ourselves, Mr. Dean, he has gone home to get a wife."

"Indeed!" said the landlord. Here the conversation ended, and Mr. Smith went home.

Fisher's sudden departure occasioned some surprise throughout the district; but when the explanation afforded by Mr. Smith was spread abroad by Mr. Dean, the landlord, people ceased to think any more about the matter.

A year elapsed, and Mr. Smith gave out that he had re-

ceived a letter from Fisher, in which he stated that it was not his intention to return to Sydney; and that he wished the whole of his property to be sold, and the proceeds remitted to him. This letter Mr. Smith showed to several of Fisher's most intimate acquaintances, who regretted extremely that they would see no more of so good a neighbour and so worthy a man.

Acting on the power of attorney which he held, Mr. Smith advertized the property for sale: the farm, the live-stock, the farming implements, the furniture, &c., in the farmhouse; also some cottages and pieces of land in and near Sydney and Paramatta: with Fisher's mortgagors, also, he came to an agreement for the repayment, within a few months, of the sums due by them.

CHAPTER II.

ABOUT a month previous to the day of sale, an old man, one David Weir, who farmed a small piece of land in the Penrith road, and who took every week to the Sydney market, butter, eggs, fowls, and a few bushels of Indian maize, was returning to his home, when he saw, seated on a rail, the well-known form of Mr. Fisher. It was very dark, but the figure and the face were as plainly visible as possible. The old man, who was not drunk, though he had been drinking at Dean's public-house, pulled up, and called out, "Halloa, Mr. Fisher! I thought you were at home in England?" There was no reply, and the old man, who was impatient to get home, as was his horse, loosed the reins and proceeded on his journey.

"Mother," said old Weir to his wife, while she was helping him off with his old top-coat, "I've seen either Mr. Fisher or his ghost."

"Nonsense!" cried the old woman; "you could not have seen Mr. Fisher, for he is in Old England; and as for spirits, you never see any without drinking them; and you are full of 'em now."

"Do you mean to say I'm drunk, mother?"

"No; but you have your liquor on board."

"Yes; but I can see, and hear, and understand, and know what I am about."

"Well, then, have your supper and go to bed; and take my advice, and say nothing to anybody about this ghost, or you will only get laughed at for your pains. Ghostesses, indeed! at your age to take on about such things; after swearing all your life you never believed in them."

"But I tell you I saw him as plain as plain could be; just as we used to see him sitting sometimes when the day was warm, and he had been round looking at his fences to see that they were all right."

"Yes, very well; tell me all about it to-morrow," said the old woman. "As I was up before daylight, and it is now nearly midnight, I feel too tired to listen to a story about a ghost. Have you sold everything well?"

"Yes; and brought back all the money safe. Here it is." The old man handed the bag over to his partner, and retired to his bed; not to rest, however, for the vision had made so great an impression upon his mind he could not help thinking of it, and lay awake till daylight, when he arose, as did his wife, to go through the ordinary avocations of the day. After he had milked the cows, and brought the filled pails into the dairy, where the old woman was churning, she said to him:

"Well, David, what about the ghost?"

"I tell you I seed it," said the old man. "And there's no call for you to laugh at me. If Mr. Fisher be not gone away—and I don't think he would have done so without coming to say good-bye to us—I'll make a talk of this. I'll go and tell Sir John, and Doctor Mackenzie, and Mr. Cox, and old parson Fulton, and everybody else in the commission of the peace. I will, as I'm a living man! What should take Fisher to England? England would be no home for him after being so many years in this country."

And, what's more, he has told me as much many a time."

" Well, and so he has told me, David. But then, you know, people will alter their minds, and you heard what Mr. Smith said about that woman?"

" Yes. But I don't believe Smith. I never had a good opinion of that man, for he could never look me straight in the face, and he is too oily a character to please me. If, as I tell you, Mr. Fisher is not alive in this country, then that was his ghost that I saw, and he has been murdered!"

" Be careful, David, what you say; and whatever you do, don't offend Mr. Smith. Remember he is a rich man, and you are a poor one; and if you say a word to his discredit, he may take the law of you, and make you pay for it; and that would be a pretty business for people who are striving to lay by just enough to keep them when they are no longer able to work."

" There's been foul play, I tell you, old woman. I am certain of it."

" But that can't be proved by your saying that you saw a ghost sitting on a rail, when you were coming home from market none the better for what you drank upon the road. And if Mr. Fisher should be still alive in England—and you know that letters have been lately received from him—what a precious fool you would look!"

" Well, perhaps you are right. But when I tell you that I saw either Mr. Fisher or his ghost sitting on that rail, don't laugh at me, because you will make me angry."

" Well, I won't laugh at you, though it must have been your fancy, old man. Whereabouts was it you saw, or thought you saw him?"

" You know the cross fence that divides Fisher's land from Smith's—near the old bridge, at the bottom of Iron Gang Hill?"

" Yes."

" Well, it was there; I'll tell you what he was dressed

in. You know that old fustian coat, with the brass buttons, and the corduroy waistcoat and trousers, and that red silk bandanna handkerchief that he used to tie round his neck?"

"Yes."

"Well, that's how he was dressed. His straw hat he held in his left hand, and his right arm was resting on one of the posts. I was about ten or eleven yards from him, for the road is broad just there, and the fence stands well back."

"And you called him, you say?"

"Yes; but he did not answer. If the horse had not been so fidgety, I'd have got down and gone up to him."

"And then you would have found out that it was all smoke."

"Say that again, and you will put me into a passion."

The old woman held her tongue, and suffered old David to talk all that day and the next about the ghost, without making any remark whatever.

CHAPTER III.

On the following Wednesday—Thursday being the market-day in Sydney—old David Weir loaded his cart, and made his way to the Australian metropolis. True to his word with his wife, he did not mention to a soul one syllable touching the ghost. Having disposed of his butter, eggs, poultry, and maize, the old man left Sydney at 4 p.m., and, at half-past ten, arrived at Dean's public-house.

He had travelled in that space of time thirty miles, and was now about eight or nine from home. As was his wont, he here baited the horse; but declined taking any refreshment himself, though pressed to do so by several travellers who wanted to "treat" him. During the whole day he had been remarkably abstemious.

At a quarter to twelve the old man re-harnessed his jaded horse, and was about to resume his journey, when

two men, who were going to Penrith, asked him for "a lift."

"Jump up, my lads," said old David; and off they were driven at a brisk walk. One of the men in the cart was a ticket-of-leave man, in the employ of Mr. Cox, and had been to Sydney to attend "muster." The other was a newly-appointed constable of the district. Both of these men had lived for several years in the vicinity of Penrith, and knew by sight all the inhabitants, male and female, free and bond.

When they neared the spot where the old man had seen the apparition, he walked the horse as slowly as possible, and again beheld the figure of Mr. Fisher, seated on the upper rail of the fence, and in precisely the same attitude and the same dress.

"Look there!" said old David to the two men, "what is that?"

"It is a man!" they both replied; "but how odd! It seems as if a light were shining through him!"

"Yes," said old David; "but look at him, what man is it?"

"It is Mr. Fisher," they said, simultaneously.

"Hold the reins, one of you," said old David; "I'll go and speak to him. They say he is at home in England; but I don't believe it."

Descending from the cart, the old man, who was as brave as a lion, approached the spectre, and stood within a few feet of it. "Speak!" he cried, "don't you know me, sir? I am David Weir. How came you by that gash in your forehead? Are you alive or dead, Mr. Fisher?" To these questions no answer was returned. The old man then stretched forth his hand, and placed it on what appeared to be Mr. Fisher's shoulder; but it was only empty air, vacant space, that the intended touch rested upon!

"There has been foul play!" said the old man, addressing the spectre, but speaking sufficiently loud to be heard by

both men in the cart. "And, by heaven, it shall be brought to light! Let me mark the spot;" and with these words he broke off several boughs from a tree near the rail, and placed them opposite to where the spectre remained sitting. Nay, further, he took out his clasp-knife and notched the very part on which the right hand of the spectre rested.

Even after the old man returned to the cart, the apparition of Mr. Fisher, exactly as he was in the flesh, was "palpable to the sight" of all three men. They sat gazing at it for full ten minutes, and then drove on in awe and wonderment.

CHAPTER IV.

WHEN old David Weir arrived at home, his wife, who was delighted to see him so calm and collected, inquired, laughingly, if he had seen the ghost again. "Never mind about that," said the old man. "Here take the money, and lock it up, while I take the horse out of the cart. He is very tired, and no wonder, for the roads are nearly a foot deep in dust. This is the fifteenth month that has passed since we had the last shower of rain; but never mind! If it holds off for a fortnight or three weeks longer, our maizo will be worth thirty shillings a bushel. It is wrong to grumble at the ways of Providence. In my belief it is very wicked."

"Well, I think so too," said the old woman. "Thirty shillings a bushel! Why, Lord a bless us, that ull set us up in the world, surely! What a mercy we did not sell when it rose to nine and sixpence!"

"Get me some supper ready, for as soon as I have taken it, I have some business to transact."

"Not out of the house?"

"Never you mind. Do as I tell you."

Having eaten his supper, the old man rose from his chair, put on his hat, and left his abode. In reply to his wife's question, , 'Where are you going?' he said, "To Mr. Cox's;

I'll be home in an hour or so. I have business, as I told you, to transact."

The old woman suggested that he could surely wait till the morning ; but he took no heed of her, and walked away.

Mr. Cox was a gentleman of very large property in the district, and was one of the most zealous and active magistrates in the colony. At all times of the day or the night he was accessible to any person who considered they had business with him.

It was past two o'clock in the morning when David Weir arrived at Mr. Cox's house, and informed the watchman that he desired to see the master. It was not the first time that the old man had visited Mr. Cox at such an hour. Two years previously he had been plundered by bushrangers, and as soon as they had gone, he went to give the information.

Mr. Cox came out, received the old man very graciously, and invited him to enter the house. Old David followed the magistrate, and detailed all that the reader is in possession of touching the ghost of Mr. Fisher.

"*And who were with you?*" said Mr. Cox, "on the second occasion of your seeing this ghost?"

"One is a ticket-of-leave man, named Williams, a man in your own employ ; and the other was a man named Hamilton, who lived for several years with Sir John Jamieson. They both rode with me in my cart," was the old man's answer.

"Has Williams returned ?"

"Yes, sir."

"It is very late, and the man may be tired and have gone to bed ; but, nevertheless, I will send for him." And Mr. Cox gave the order for Williams to be summoned.

Williams in a few minutes came, and corroborated David Weir's statement in every particular.

"It is the most extraordinary thing I ever heard in my life," said Mr. Cox. "But go home, Weir, and you, Wil-

liams, go to your rest. To-morrow morning I will go with you to the spot and examine it. You say that you have marked it, Weir?"

"Yes, sir."

The old man then left Mr. Cox, and Williams returned to his hut. Mr. Cox did not sleep again till a few minutes before the day dawned, and then when he dropped off for a quarter of an hour he dreamt of nothing but the ghost sitting on the rail.

CHAPTER V.

THE next morning, or rather on *that* morning, Mr. Cox, at eight o'clock, rode over to the township of Penrith, and saw Hamilton, Weir's second witness. Hamilton, as did Williams, corroborated all that Weir had stated, so far as related to the second time the spectre had been seen; and Hamilton further volunteered the assertion that no one of the party was in the slightest degree affected by drink.

There was a tribe of blacks in the vicinity, and Mr. Cox sent for the chief and several others. The European name of this chief was "Johnny Crook," and, like all his race, he was an adept in tracking. Accompanied by Weir, Hamilton, Williams, and the blacks, Mr. Cox proceeded to the spot. Weir had no difficulty in pointing out the exact rail. The broken boughs and the notches on the post were his unerring guides.

Johnny Crook, after examining the rail very minutely, pointed to some stains, and exclaimed "*white man's blood!*!" Then leaping over the fence, he examined the brushwood and the ground adjacent. Ere long he started off, beckoning Mr. Cox and his attendants to follow. For more than three-quarters of a mile, over forest land, the savage tracked the footsteps of a man, and something trailed along the earth (fortunately, so far as the ends of justice were concerned, no rain had fallen during the period alluded to by Old David, namely, fifteen months. One heavy

shower would have obliterated all these tracks, most probably; and, curious enough, that very night there was a frightful downfall, such a downfall as had not been known for many a long year), until they came to a pond, or water-hole, upon the surface of which was a bluish scum. This scum the blacks, after an examination of it, declared to be "white man's fat." The pond in question was not on Fisher's land, or Smith's. It was on Crown land, in the rear of their properties. When full to the brink, the depth of the water was about ten feet in the centre; but at the time referred to there was not more than three feet and a half, and badly as the cattle wanted water, it was very evident, from the absence of recent hock-prints, that they would not drink at this pond. The blacks walked into the water at the request of Mr. Cox, and felt about the muddy bottom with their feet. They were not long employed thus, when they came upon a bag of bones, or rather, the remains of a human body, kept together by clothing which had become so rotten it would scarcely bear the touch. The skull was still attached to the body, which the blacks raised to the surface and brought on shore, together with a big stone, and the remains of a large silk handkerchief. The features were not recognizable, but the buttons on the clothes, and the boots were those which Mr. Fisher used to wear! And in the pocket of the trousers was found a buckhorn-handled knife, which bore the initials, "J. F., " engraved on a small silver plate. This was also identified by Weir, who had seen Mr. Fisher use the knife scores of times. It was of those knives which contained a large blade, two small ones, a corkscrew, gimlet, horse-shoe picker, tweezers, screw-driver, &c., &c. The murderer, whoever it might be, had either forgotten to take away this knife, or had purposely left it with the body, for all the other pockets were turned inside out.

"Well, sir, what do you think of that? " said old Weir

to Mr. Cox, who looked on in a state of amazement which almost amounted to bewilderment.

"I scarcely know what to think of it," was Mr. Cox's reply. "But it is lucky for you, David, that you are a man of such good character that you are beyond the pale of being suspected of so foul a deed."

"I, sir?"

"Yes, you. If it were not that this dead man's property is advertized for sale, it might have gone very hard with you, old man. It would have been suggested that your conscience had something to do with the information you gave me of the ghost. But stay here, all of you, with the body until I return. I shall not be absent for more than an hour. Have you a pair of handcuffs about you, Hamilton?"

"Several pair, sir," replied the constable.

CHAPTER VI.

AFTER leaving the dead body, Mr. Cox rode to Fisher's house, in which Mr. Smith was living. Mr. Smith, on being informed of the approach of so exalted a person as Mr. Cox, one of the proudest men in the colony, came out to receive him with all respect and honour. Mr. Cox—who would not have given his hand to an "ex-piree" (under any circumstances), no matter how wealthy he might be—answered Mr. Smith's greeting with a bow, and then asked if he could speak with him for a few minutes. Mr. Smith replied, "Most certainly, sir;" and ordering a servant to take the magistrate's horse to the stables, he conducted his visitor into the best room of the weather-boarded and comfortable tenement. The furniture was plain and homely, but serviceable, nevertheless, and remarkably clean. The pictures on the walls formed rather a motley collection, having been picked up at various times by Mr. Fisher at sales by public auction of the effects of deceased officials. Amongst others were two valuable oil-

paintings, which had originally belonged to Major Ovens, an eccentric officer, who was buried on Garden Island, in the harbour of Port Jackson. These had been bought for less money than the frames were worth. There were also some Dutch paintings, of which neither Mr. Fisher nor those who had not bid against him little knew the real value when they were knocked down for forty-two shillings the set—six in number!

"I have come to speak to you on a matter of business," said the magistrate. "Is the sale of this farm and the stock to be a peremptory sale?—that is to say, will it be knocked down, *bona fide*, to the highest bidder?"

"Yes, sir."

"And the terms are cash?"

"Yes, sir."

"Sales for cash are not very common in this country. The terms are usually ten per cent. deposit, and the residue at three, six, nine, and twelve months, in equal payments."

"Very true, sir; but these are Mr. Fisher's instructions, by which I must be guided."

"What do you imagine the farm will realize, including the stock and all that is upon it?"

"Well, sir, it ought to fetch 1,500*l.*, ready money."

"I hear that the *whole* of Mr. Fisher's property is to be sold, either by auction or private contract?"

"Yes, sir."

"What will it realize, think you, in cash?"

"Not under 12,000*l.*, I should say, sir."

"One of my brothers has an idea of bidding for this farm: what about the title?"

"As good as can be, sir. It was originally granted to Colonel Foucaux, who sold it and conveyed it to Mr. Thomas Blaxsell, who sold it and conveyed it to Fisher. But as you know, sir, twenty years' undisputed possession of itself makes a good title, and Fisher has been on this

farm far longer than that. All the deeds are here; you may see them, if you please, sir."

"There is no occasion for that; as Mr. Fisher's constituted attorney, you will sign the deed of conveyance on his behalf."

"Yes, sir."

"What is the date of the power of attorney?"

"I will tell you, sir, in one moment;" and opening a bureau which stood in one corner of the room, Mr. Smith produced the deed, and placed it in Mr. Cox's hands.

With the signature of Fisher, Mr. Cox was not acquainted; or, at all events, he could not swear to it. He had seen it—seen Fisher write his name, it is true: but then it was that sort of hand which all uneducated and out-door working-men employ when they write their names, a sprawling round-hand. But as to the signatures of the attesting witnesses, there could be no question whatever. They were those of two of the most eminent solicitors (partners) in Sydney—Mr. Cox's own solicitors, in fact.

"And the letter of instructions, authorizing you to sell by auction, *for cash*; for it says in this power, 'and to sell the same, or any part thereof in accordance with such instructions as he may receive from me by letter after my arrival in England.'

"Here is the letter, sir," said Mr. Smith, producing it.

Mr. Cox read the letter attentively. It ran thus:—

"DEAR SIR,—I got home all right, and found my friends and relations quite well and hearty, and very glad to see me again. I am so happy among 'em, I shan't go out no more to the colony. So sell all off, by public auction, or by private contract, but let it be for cash, as I want the money sharp; I am going to buy a share in a brewery with it. I reckon it ought, altogether, to fetch about 17,000*l.* But do your best, and let me have it quick, whatever it is.

"Your faithful friend,

"JOHN FISHER."

There was no post-mark on this letter. In those days the postage on letters was very high, and nothing was more common for persons in all conditions of life to forward

communications by private hand. As to the signature of the letter, it was identical with that of the power of attorney.

"All this is very satisfactory," said Mr. Cox. "Is this letter, dated five months ago, the last you have received?"

"Yes, sir. It came by the last ship, and there has not been another in since."

"Good-morning, Mr. Smith."

"Good-morning, sir."

CHAPTER VII.

RIDING away from Fisher's late abode, Mr. Cox was somewhat perplexed. That power of attorney, drawn up so formally, and signed by Fisher in the presence of such credible witnesses, and then the letter written, signed in the same way by the same hand, were all in favour of the presumption that Fisher had gone to England, leaving his friend and neighbour Smith in charge of his property, real and personal. But then, there were the remains! And that they were the remains of Fisher, Mr. Cox firmly believed. When he had returned to the pond, by a circuitous route, Mr. Cox ordered the blacks to strip from a blue gum-tree, with their tomahawks, a large sheet of bark. Upon this the remains were placed, carried straightway to Fisher's house (Mr. Cox, upon horseback, heading the party), and placed in the verandah. While this proceeding was in progress Mr. Smith came out, and wore upon his countenance an expression of surprise, astonishment, wonder. But there was nothing in that. The most innocent man in the world would be surprised, astonished, and in wonderment on beholding such a spectacle.

"What is this, Mr. Cox?" he said.

"The last that I have heard and seen of Mr. Fisher," was the reply.

"Of Mr. Fisher, sir!"

"Yes."

"These were his old clothes," said Mr. Smith, examining them carefully: "most certainly this was the old suit he used to wear. But as for the body, it can't be his; for he is alive, as you have seen by his letter. These old clothes he must have given away, as he did many other old things, the day before he left this; and the man to whom he gave 'em must have been murdered."

"Do you think he could have given away this knife?" said David Weir. "To my knowledge, he had it for better than twelve years, and often have I heard him say he would not part with it for 50*l.*"

"Give it away? Yes!" said Smith. "Didn't he give away his old saddle and bridle? Didn't he give away his old spurs? Didn't he give away a cow and a calf?"

"He was a good man, and an honest man, and a very fair-dealing man, and in his latter days a very righteous and godly man, but he was not a giving-away man by any manner of means," returned old David.

"And if he gave away these boots," said Hamilton, "they were a very good fit for the man who received them."

"This man, whoever he is, was murdered, no doubt," said Mr. Smith, with the most imperturbable countenance and the coolest manner. "Just look at this crack in his skull, Mr. Cox."

"Yes, I have seen that," said the magistrate.

"And that's where poor Fisher's ghost had it," said old David.

"Fisher's ghost!" said Mr. Smith. "What do you mean, Weir?"

"Why, the ghost that I have twice seen sitting on the rail, not far from the old bridge at the bottom of the hill yonder."

"Ghost! you have seen a ghost, have you?" returned Mr. Smith, giving Mr. Cox a very cunning and expressive look. "Well, I have heard that ghosts *do* visit those who have sent them out of this world, and I dare say Mr. Cox has heard the same. Now, if I had been you, I'd have

held my tongue about a ghost (for ghosts are only the creatures of our consciences) for fear of being taken in charge."

"*I taken in charge!*" said old Weir. "No, no! *my* conscience is clear, and what I have seen and said I'll swear to. Wherever I go, I'll talk about it up to my dying hour. That was the ghost of Mr. Fisher that I saw, and these are the remains of his body."

"If I were Mr. Cox, a magistrate," said Mr. Smith, "I would give you in charge."

"I will not do that, Mr. Smith," replied Mr. Cox. "I feel that my duty compels me to give *you* in custody of this police-officer."

"For what, sir?"

"On a charge of wilful murder. Hamilton!"

"Yes, sir."

"Manacle Mr. Smith, and take him to Penrith."

Mr. Smith held up his wrists with the air of an injured and pure-minded man, who was so satisfied of his innocence that he was prepared for the strictest investigation into his conduct, and had no dread as to the result.

CHAPTER VIII.

A CORONER'S inquest was held on the remains found in the pond, and a verdict of "Wilful Murder" was returned against Edward Smith. The jury also found that the remains were those of John Fisher, albeit they were so frightfully decomposed that personal identification was out of all question.

The vessel in which Fisher was reported to have left Sydney happened to be in the harbour. The captain and officers were interrogated, and in reply to the question,— "Did a man named John Fisher go home in your vessel?" the reply was "Yes, and on the Custom-house officers coming on board, as usual, to look at the passengers and search the ship, to see that no convicts were attempting to

make their escape, he produced his parchment certificate of freedom, in which there was a description of his person."

"And did the man answer exactly to that description?"

"Yes, making allowance for his years, on looking at the date of the certificate. If he had not, he would have been detained, as many convicts have been."

"And during the voyage did he talk of himself?"

"Frequently; he said that he was a farmer near Penrith; that after he had served his time he went to work, earned some money, rented a farm, then bought it, and by industry and perseverance had made a fortune."

"Did he ever mention a Mr. Smith—a friend of his?"

"Often. He said he had left everything in Mr. Smith's hands, and that he did not like to sell his property till he saw how he should like England after so long an absence. He further said that if he did not come back to the colony, he would have all his property sold off, and join some trading firm in his own country."

The solicitor who had prepared the power of attorney, and witnessed it, said that a person representing himself as John Fisher, of Ruskdale, in the district of Penrith, came to them and gave instructions for the deed; and after it was duly executed, took it away with him, and requested that a copy might be made and kept in their office, which was done accordingly. In payment of the bill, twenty dollars (*5l. currency*), he gave a cheque on the bank of New South Wales, which was cashed on presentation; that the man who so represented himself as John Fisher was a man of about forty-six or forty-eight years of age, about five feet eight inches in height, and rather stout; had light-blue eyes, sandy hair, and whiskers partially gray, a low but intelligent forehead, and a rather reddish nose.

This description answered exactly that of Mr. Fisher at the time of his departure from the colony.

The cashier of the bank showed the cheque for twenty dollars. Mr. Fisher had an account there, and drew out

his balance, 200*l.*—not in person, but by a cheque—two days previous to his alleged departure. He had written several letters to the bank, and on comparing those letters with the letter Mr. Smith said he had received from England, they corresponded exactly.

Opinion was very much divided in the colony with respect to Mr. Smith's guilt. Numbers of persons who knew the man, and had dealings with him, thought him incapable of committing such a crime, or any heinous offence, in fact. The records were looked into, to ascertain of what offence he had been convicted originally. It was for embezzling the sum of twenty-two shillings and fourpence, which had been entrusted to him when he was an apprentice for his master, who was a market-gardener, seedsman, and florist. As for the story about the ghost, very, very few put any trust in it. Bulwer was then a very young gentleman, and had never dreamt of writing about Eugene Aram; nor had Thomas Hood contemplated his exquisite little poem on the same subject. Nor had the murder of the Red Barn been brought to light through the agency of a dream. The only instance of ghosts coming to give evidence of murder were those of Banquo and Hamlet's father; and Shakspeare was not considered an authority to be relied upon in such a case as that of Fisher.

Smith's house and premises, as well as those of Fisher, were searched in the hope of finding apparel, or some garment stained with blood, but in vain. Nor did the inspection of Smith's letters and papers disclose aught that strengthened the case against him. On the contrary, his accounts touching Fisher's property were kept entirely distinct from his own, and in memorandum-books were found entries of the following description:—

Sept. 9. Wrote to Fisher to say P. has paid the interest on his mortgage.

Sept. 27. Received 27*l.* 10*s.* from Wilson for year's rent of Fisher's house in Castlereagh Street.

Nov. 12. Paid Baxter 3*l.* 12*s.* due to him by Fisher for Bullock Chains.

No case had ever before created, and probably never will again create, so great a sensation. Very many were firmly impressed with the belief that Weir was the murderer of the man who wore Fisher's clothes, crediting Smith's assertion or suggestion that he had given them away. Many others were of opinion that the remains were those of Fisher, and the man who murdered him had robbed him of his certificate of freedom, as well as of the cash and papers he had about him, and then representing Fisher, had got out of the colony, and made Smith a dupe.

CHAPTER IX.

THE anxiously-looked-for day of trial came. The court was crowded with persons in every grade of society, from the highest to the very lowest. Mr. Smith stood in the dock as firmly and as composedly as though he had been arraigned for a mere libel, or a common assault—the penalty of conviction not exceeding a fine and a few months' imprisonment.

The case was opened by the Attorney-General with the greatest fairness imaginable, and when the witnesses gave their evidence (Weir, Hamilton, Williams, and Mr. Cox), every one appeared to hold his breath. Smith, who defended himself, cross-examined them all with wonderful tact and ability; and, at the conclusion of the case for the prosecution, addressed the jury at considerable length, and with no mean amount of eloquence.

The judge then summed up. His honour was the last man in the world to believe in supernatural appearances; but with the ability and fairness that characterized his career in the colony, he weighed the probabilities and improbabilities with the greatest nicety. To detail all the points taken by the judge would be tedious; but if his charge had any leaning one way or other, it was in favour of the prisoner.

The jury in those days was not composed of the people,

but of military officers belonging to the regiment quartered in the colony. These gentlemen, in ordinary cases, did not give much of their minds to the point at issue. Some of them usually threw themselves back, and shut their eyes—not to think, but “nod.” Others whispered to each other, not about the guilt or innocence of the prisoner at the bar, but about their own affairs; whilst those who had any talent for drawing, exercised it by sketching the scene, or taking the likeness of the prisoner, the witnesses, the counsel, the sheriff, and the judge. But in this case they seemingly devoted all their energies, in order to enable them to arrive at the truth. To every word that fell from the judge during his charge, which lasted over two hours, they listened with breathless attention, and when it was concluded, they requested permission to retire to consider their verdict. This was at half-past five in the afternoon of Friday, and not until a quarter to eleven did the jury return into court, and retake their places in the box.

The excitement that prevailed was intense, and when the murmurs in the crowd, so common upon such occasions, had subsided, amidst awful stillness the prothonotary put that all-momentous question, “Gentlemen of the jury, what say you? Is the prisoner at the bar guilty, or not guilty?”

With a firm, clear voice, the foreman, a captain in the army, uttered the word—

“GUILTY!”

Murmurs of applause from some, and of disapprobation from others, instantly resounded through the hall of justice. From the reluctant manner in which the judge put the black cap upon his head, it was evident that he was not altogether satisfied with the finding of the jury. He had, however, no alternative; and in the usual formal manner, he sentenced the prisoner to be hanged on the following Monday morning, at eight o’clock.

Smith heard the sentence without moving a single muscle, or betraying any species of emotion, and left the dock with

as firm a step as that which he employed when entering it. His demeanour throughout the trial, and after he was sentenced, brought over many who previously thought him guilty to a belief in his innocence, and a petition to the governor to spare his life was speedily drafted and numerously signed. It was rumoured that the chief-justice who tried the case had also made a similar recommendation, and that the governor, in deference thereto, had ordered a reprieve to be made out; but not to be delivered to the sheriff until seven o'clock on Monday morning. It was further stated that the governor was of opinion that the finding of the jury was a correct one. The press of the colony did not lead, but fell into, the most popular opinion, that it would be tantamount to murder to take away the life of any human being upon such evidence as that given on the trial.

CHAPTER X.

On the Monday morning, so early as half-past six, the rocks which overlooked the jail-yard in Sydney, and commanded a good view of the gallows, were crowded with persons of the lower orders; and when, at a little before seven, the hangman came out to suspend the rope to the beam, and make other preparations, he was hailed with loud hisses and execrations: so emphatic was the demonstration of the multitude in favour of the condemned man. By seven o'clock the mob was doubled; and when the under-sheriff or any other functionary was seen in the court-yard, the yells with which he was greeted were something terrific.

At five minutes to eight, the culprit was led forth, and at the foot of the gallows, and near his coffin (according to the custom prevailing in the colony), was pinioned, preparatory to ascending the ladder. Whilst this ceremony was being performed, the shouts of the populace were deafening. "Shame! Shame! Shame! Hang Weir! He is the guilty man! This is a murder! a horrid murder!"

Such were the ejaculations that resounded from every quarter of that dense mob assembled to witness the execution; while the calm and submissive manner in which Smith listened to the reverend gentleman who attended him in his last moments, heightened rather than suppressed the popular clamour.

At one minute past eight the fatal bolt was drawn, and Smith, after struggling for about half a minute, was dead! Whereupon the mob renewed their yells, execrations, hisses, and cries of "Shame! Shame! Shame! Murder! Murder! Murder!" These noises could not recall to life Mr. Smith. He had gone to his account, and after hanging an hour, his body was cut down; the coffin containing it conveyed, in an uncovered cart, to Slaughter-House Point (the last resting-place of all great criminals), and the grave filled in with quick-lime.

There was a gloom over Sydney until the evening at half-past six o'clock. Almost every one was now disposed to think that the blood of an innocent man had been shed. "The witnesses were all perjured, not excepting Mr. Cox;" "the jury were a parcel of fools;" and "the governor, who would not listen to the judge, a hard-hearted and cruel man." Such were the opinions that were current from one end of Sydney to the other. But at the hour above mentioned—half-past six in the evening—the public mind was disabused of its erroneous idea. At that hour it became generally known that on the previous night Mr. Smith had sent for the Rev. Mr. Cooper, and to that gentleman had confessed that he deserved the fate that awaited him; that for more than two years he had contemplated the murder of John Fisher, for the sake of his wealth, which was equal to 20,000*l.*; that the man who had personated Fisher, and executed the power of attorney, had gone to England, and written thence the letter upon which he so much relied in his defence, was a convict who resembled the deceased in person, and to whom he (Smith) gave Fisher's certificate

of freedom; that it was his (Smith's) intention to have left the colony as soon as the proceeds of the sale came into his possession—partly because he longed to lead the last portion of his life in England, but chiefly because, from the day on which he committed the murder, he had been haunted by that ghost which old Weir had truly sworn he saw sitting on the rail; that the deed was done by a single blow from a tomahawk, and that the deceased never spoke after it was inflicted. He protested that the man who had personated Fisher, in respect to the execution of the power of attorney, and who had escaped from the colony, was ignorant of his (Smith's) intention to murder Fisher; and that the letter which had been forwarded from England was only a copy of one which he (Smith) had told him to despatch a few months after he had arrived at home. He concluded by saying, that since he struck Fisher that fatal blow his life had been a burden to him, much as he had struggled to disguise his feelings and put a bold front on the matter; and that he would much rather, since he had been convicted, suffer death than be reprieved—although he hoped that until after the breath had left his body, his confession would be kept a secret.

II.

THE MASTER AND HIS MAN.

I HAD occasion, one day, to attend the police-office in Sydney. One of my convict servants, a farrier, had purposely “pricked” and lamed a favourite horse of mine; and I was determined to have him flogged. The reader may naturally ask, how did I know the man had *purposely* pricked the animal? Because he had been heard to say that the next time the horse required to be shod, I wouldn't be able to ride him for some weeks to come. I might, by speaking to the magistrate, have had the culprit put upon

the treadmill for a month, or placed in a road-gang, to work in irons, for three, six, nine, or twelve months, or flogged to the extent of one hundred lashes, twenty-five being the minimum. (By the way, there were slang terms applied to these doses of the lash : twenty-five was called a "tester;" fifty, "a bob;" seventy-five, "a bull;" and a hundred a "canary.") My chief reason for having the farrier flogged was, that I should not long be deprived of his services, for I had made up my mind to suggest to the magistrate that he should only receive fifty; and as he was a strong, stout man, that number could not do him much harm, while it would suffice to operate upon him as a punishment. Fifty lashes, administered by the hands of a landsman, who was a convict himself, were not equal to nine administered by the strong arm of a boatswain who can cut "crossways." Had Captain G., whom Marryat has immortalized, seen a convict flogged at Hyde Park Barracks, Sydney, he might have been justified in exclaiming to the operator—"One would think you were brushing flies off a sleeping Venus, instead of punishing a scoundrel with a hide as thick as a buffalo's! 'One!' Do you call that one? It is not a quarter of one! You are only fit to be a fly-flapper at a pork-shop! You Molly Mop! is that the way you handle a cat? *Where's the boatswain?*"

I was walking up and down the court-yard, waiting for the case to be called on, when I was approached and saluted by that prince of Australian thief-takers, Mr. George Flower, who figures so conspicuously in "The Forger's Wife."

"It is a beautiful day, sir," he remarked.

"Very," I replied.

"And a pretty world it is, sir."

"Yes. But what leads you to make the remark at this moment?"

"Do you see these two men standing in the doorway of the office, talking?"

"Yes."

The two men to whom Flower called my attention were habited in fustian trousers, fustian waistcoats, fustian shooting-coats, and black neckties. On their heads were common straw hats; on their feet high-low shoes. Had I been asked to guess their occupation, I should have said that they were constables. One of these men was nearly six feet high; the other not more than five feet four.

"They are 'Master and Man,'" resumed Flower. "The short un is the master—the long un is the man. The short un is a lord—the eldest son of an English earl. The long un is—heaven knows who. He was lagged under the name of Adolphus Frederick Jones. But he is a blood, and there's no mistake about it, sir!"

Here the two men of whom Flower was speaking approached us, and the "short un" (as Flower called him) made me a very graceful bow, and said—"Forgive me, if I am interrupting you; but I am very anxious to speak to Mr. Flower about a pencil-case which I have lost. It is of no great value intrinsically; but to me it is very precious."

I signified by a gesture that Mr. Flower was at his entire disposal.

The taller person also saluted me by raising his hat, and his bearing at once satisfied me that he was a man of good birth. I returned his salute; but I evinced no desire to enter into conversation with him; on the contrary, I sauntered away, for it mattered not what might have been his rank or former position in society, since he was then a convict, undergoing the punishment of transportation for some criminal offence; in short, a convicted felon.

Ere long my case was called on. I hastened into the office, and deposed on oath, as follows:—"The prisoner, my assigned servant, farrier by trade, purposely lamed one of my horses while shoeing him."

"You are satisfied he did it on purpose?" the magistrate asked me.

"Perfectly," I replied.

"What have you to say to the charge?" the magistrate asked the prisoner.

"Didn't do it on purpose, your worship."

"It is enough that you lamed the horse."

Here I made my suggestion as to what the punishment should be, and it was forthwith awarded; the magistrate informing the prisoner that he was fortunate in having so lenient a master. The case did not occupy five minutes. Such cases were always speedily settled.

I have mentioned in a former paper that in "the good old times" (as they were called), every master who was a magistrate might hold a court and punish his own convict servants. Such, however, was not the case at the time to which this narrative refers. General Rourke then ruled the colony, and the privilege above alluded to having been grossly abused, his excellency ordered that no magistrate should have any voice in the punishment of his servants, beyond making a suggestion as to the *mode* of punishment, and that all offenders were to be tried in police-courts, before *stipendiary* magistrates.

After leaving the court, I mounted my horse and was riding towards my home, some seven miles distant from Sydney, on the Paramatta road, when I was overtaken by Mr. Flower, who, mounted on his famous galloway, Sheriff, was proceeding to a place called Prospect, to effect, if possible, the capture of three notorious bushrangers. He pulled up, and as we jogged along the road together, he gave me some further information touching "The Master and his Man." In short, Flower afforded me their history, so far as it related to their appearance in the colony of New South Wales. It was thus he ran on:—

"As I have already told you, sir, the short un is a lord—that we know. Who the long un is nobody knows, as he was lagged under a false name. Some say that *he* is the son of a lord; but that's all guess-work. That he was

born a gentleman, we don't want a ghost to come and tell us."

"Certainly not," I conceded.

"How the long un came to be lagged was this. Two or three years ago, when they were at college, they went to Greenwich, or Gravesend, I forgot which, and they hired a trap to take 'em to London. When they got to London, where they spent all the ready money they had, and both being very fresh, blest if long un doesn't go and sell the trap to a livery-stable keeper, who directly afterwards found out who was the real owner of the trap. Long un was followed, and collared, and given in charge. A clearer case there couldn't be; and as drunkenness is not held as an excuse for felony, he got his sevenpenn'orth, and was sent to the hulks, until such time as a ship was ready to bring out a batch. He was in the hulks for six months. Meantime the short un takes a passage to Sydney, and rents a small cottage in Elizabeth Street, where he makes himself as comfortable as he can, under the circumstances. He went to Gov'ment House—he did then, that is to say—he was hand-in-glove with all the big-wigs, and when the ship arrives with the long un on board, he applies for him by name, and gets him assigned to him as his servant."

"But," I observed, "the shorter man of the two, whom I now remember having seen before, is not known at Government House as a lord, but as Mr. Geary."

"That *is* the name he goes by, sir. But at Government House they know who he really is. He told Sir Richard and the Colonial Secretary that he had only come out to see the colony, and was here *incog.*, as he did not wish to be mi-lorded.

"How do you know this?

"Ah, sir," replied Flower, with the air, and using almost the very words of Fouché, in addressing Napoleon, "If I were to divulge the sources of my information, I should not be the great man that I am. You lose your property, sir;

I find it. In some cases the culprit is punished; in others not. It all depends on my judgment and discretion. What can it signify to you so long as what is Cæsar's is rendered unto Cæsar? My lord (or Mr. Geary, if you please) has lost his pencil-case. He has told me where he has been, and has answered all the questions I put to him; and on this day week, if not before, he will have it restored to him, or my name is not George Flower."

"And how do these persons" (I scarcely know why I did not say "gentlemen") "amuse themselves?" I inquired.

"In various ways, sir," responded Flower. "They saunter about the town, look into the police-office, or the Supreme Court, or the Royal Hotel, just to see what is going on; or they take a boat and have a sail; or go out near the Heads, shark-fishing; or wander over the Surrey Hills in search of quail or whatever is worth shooting. And sometimes they journey into the interior, and take a spell at kangaroo-hunting. And, about a month ago, they joined me in one of my bushranging expeditions, and right good pluck they showed. The little un faced his man, and shot him as dead as a nit, and I got the reward—fifty pounds—for his carcass."

"Do they take their meals together, at the same table?" I asked.

"Oh, yes," said Flower. "But in public they are not very familiar. I breakfasted with them once, and they called each other by their Christian names. They never walk together arm-in-arm in the streets, but just as you saw them to-day; the master always walks a yard or two in advance of his man. There's a poetry—isn't that what you call it?—about the whole business that I very much like."

"What do you mean by poetry, Flower? There is not much poetry in hiring a horse and chaise, and then feloniously disposing of it."

"No, sir. But there is in one man giving up all the comforts of his home, and coming out to this jail—for the colony

is only a jail, after all—for the sake of his friend. Now, suppose he had left him to his fate? What would have been the consequence? He would have been assigned to some master who would have bullied him, perhaps. He would have taken to the bush and the road, or have done something for which he would have got two years in irons; and those two years wouldn't, as you know, sir, count in his lagging. He would have become desperate, and most likely have killed the overseer with a pickaxe; for your bloods are always the most violent men in bondage. Put a carrion crow under a crate, and give him offal and water, and he is contented. But try it on with an eagle that has been accustomed to soar amongst the clouds. God bless you! give him the slightest chance, and he will clap his sinewy claws into your ribs and pick your eyes out."

Indisposed to argue the question, I suffered Mr. Flower to continue:—

"As it is, sir, when he has served his time, and gets his bit of parchment,* they will go home, and their friends will be none the wiser; that is to say, they will know nothing about the horse-and-gig business, and the trip across the pond (ocean).

"How do you know?"

"As I told you before, sir, I never divulge the means of getting at the truth."

"But if their friends do not know of their place of abode, how do they live? Where do they get wherewith to satisfy all their wants?"

"They haven't got much. The little un brought a few hundreds out with him; but it is pretty well gone by this time. The long un sold his dressing-case the other day for 25*l.*—a thing that must have cost a hundred, if not more."

"Is the convicted person, think you, sensible of his degraded position?"

"He does not feel it—or does not seem to feel it—so

* Certificate of freedom.

much as the other. Between ourselves, sir, it was the little un who suggested the sale of the trap, which the long un executed. Morally, they were both in the same kettle, but not legally. However, that does not alter the poetry part of the business. That's what *I* like. It's a very common thing, as we all know, for a wife to follow her transported husband to this Bay, and get him assigned to her. Very few colonial secretaries can withstand the tears, and witness the grief of a woman. That's all very natural on the wife's part. And I can also understand a fond husband following a transported wife, and regaining her here. But it is very seldom that you find friendship going to such lengths as it has gone in this case."

"Perhaps not," said I. And here, insomuch as I was at the gate of my own grounds, I parted company with Mr. Flower.

* * * * *

Some five or six months subsequent to the time of the conversation above detailed, I paid a visit to the Supreme Court to witness a very remarkable trial—remarkable chiefly on account of the character of the prisoner, who had been a commander in the Royal Navy, and who was the brother of a baronet, who was a member of the British Ministry.

The culprit was subsequently hanged for the murder of a poor woman. (*See p. 95.*) He was now on his trial for forgery—the name of the gentleman with whom he took such an unwarrantable liberty being that of the chief-justice of the colony. It was a cheque for 10*l.* that he forged. He must be known to the reader as George Ketchcalfe.

I had scarcely taken my seat on one of the benches close to the bar—the barristers' place—when Mr. Geary, the "master," took a seat beside me. His "man," Smith, stood amongst the crowd—and a very dense crowd it was. The prisoner had been originally transported for stealing one of

the chronometers belonging to the 18-gun brig that he commanded, and pawning it for a fifth of its value.

When the prisoner was placed in the dock, he made a low, respectful, dignified, and graceful bow to the Bench, and then assumed a somewhat defiant attitude. He was a short, thick-set man, of about forty-two years of age; his face was not handsome by any means, but the features and the expression of his face was something very peculiar. He had deeply-set black eyes, a short nose, which was constantly moved by a nervous twitching, a long upper lip, fine teeth, a mouth expressive of ferocity and daring, and a very prominent chin and a short neck. The forehead was not lofty—but broad, and decidedly intellectual.

All eyes were now upon the prisoner, who pleaded “Not Guilty” in a loud and confident tone of voice.

“How wonderfully like his brother!” exclaimed Mr. Geary, addressing himself to me.

“Indeed!” I replied, for until that day I had never heard of, much less seen, the prisoner’s brother.

“The very image of him!” said Mr. Geary. “Ah, me! it is indeed a strange world.”

I don’t know exactly what possessed me, but I took it into my head to let off a commonplace remark, or platitude, on the occasion, and with the air of a preacher, I said, “It only shows us the necessity of keeping our passions in control.”

Mr. Geary said “Yes,” and smiled: so that it is to be questioned if my platitude and grave look had much substantial effect upon him.

The trial proceeded, and during its continuance we exchanged very many remarks. Mr. Geary did not strike me as a man of any ability, nor was he a well-educated man. His manners and address were good; but I could see that he was one of those men who delight rather in the society of their inferiors than their equals, though, to the credit of Mr. Geary be it said, he did not keep “low company”

during his stay in Sydney. In short, after the arrival of his convicted friend, he did not keep any company at all. He went nowhere, except with his "servant," and his servant he could not take into society. His chief associate was Mr. George Flower, to whom he was as partial as I was myself, and as were numbers of gentlemen.

The trial of Ketchcalfe ended in a verdict of Guilty, and he was sentenced to be transported to Norfolk Island for the term of his natural life. Instead of appearing hurt at the sentence, the prisoner volunteered to the bystanders a piece of information. "Does your honour know," said he, addressing the judge, with much animation and sincerity combined: "Does your honour know that Norfolk Island is the first land that the sun lights up and shines upon when he rises? If you will consult a chart, you will find that it is the furthermost soil eastward." From that day until Mr. Geary took his departure from the colony with his friend, whose time had expired, whenever we met in the streets, or at a review, or upon a racecourse, we saluted each other, and when he happened to be alone, which was a rare occurrence, we exchanged a few civil sentences. During the last eighteen months of Mr. Geary's stay in the colony he was overwhelmed by pecuniary difficulties, and for several months was a prisoner for debt in the common jail. For his liberation, eventually, he was indebted to his friend, Mr. George Flower, who paid the whole of his debts in full, and "took him out in triumph," as Flower used to express it.

"How did you raise that 335*l.*?" I one day asked the thief-taker.

"Well, sir, I did it in this way," was the reply. "There was fifty pound reward for Carroty Joe, the bushranger, that I shot at Campbell Town, and brought in dead. There was fifty for his pal, that I captured, and brought in alive. There was five-and-twenty for a bolter from Captain Johnston—a man that had been out two years. That was

125*l.* The rest I borrowed from four Jews, receivers of stolen property, on these easy and quiet terms: my verbal promissory note, payable, with interest, at one thousand per cent. per annum—the account to be settled on the great day of judgment, and the money to be forthcoming on the day after."

"And did they consent to those terms?"

"Consent, sir! Why, there is not one of them that I could not transport to Norfolk Island for life, at any moment that I like."

* * * * *

A few weeks after Mr. Geary returned to England: he became an earl, and at this present moment enjoys the title and the estates of his ancestors. He repaid Flower to the full, and did not fail to repeat how grateful he felt to him for his "kindness rendered at a time of such dire difficulty and need."

* * * * *

III.

GILES! AS I LIVE!

CHAPTER I.

SOME forty-three years ago a wealthy banker, a Mr. Binkie, was travelling from London to Woodstock, when the progress of his carriage was arrested by two gentlemen of the road, who made the usual demand of "Your money or your life!" The banker instantly complied, and dropped a purse, containing gold and bank-notes, amounting to 70*l.*, into the hand which one of the gentlemen (both of them were masked) put into the carriage window. The hand, thus stretched forth, was ungloved, and while the banker was finding his purse, he could not help taking particular notice of it. There is something certainly in the shape of a hand. I do not mean to say that it is always a criterion

of a man's or woman's birth ; but, generally speaking, from looking at the hand, a very fair estimate may be formed of the owner's condition in life. Now, the hand into which the banker dropped his purse was a very peculiar hand. It was not particularly small ; but it was soft and white, and the fingers were so long as to be seemingly out of proportion. The nails were carefully pared, and there was a pinkish hue about them. On the inner part of the thumb there was a scar, or mark rather, such a mark as would remain after a wound caused by the application of a piece of red-hot iron. The shape of this scar was that of a half-moon, and its size about half an inch in length, with the proportionate breadth. The gentleman of the road, while holding out his hand, was compelled to stretch his body over the shoulder of his horse, and while in this position the banker had a good view of the back part of his neck, a portion of his hair, and the lower part of his right ear ; for the mask that he wore covered only the features—the face. It would be a hard thing to swear to a man, by seeing only a small portion of the back part of his neck, and an ear ; but so very peculiar was the formation in this case, that the banker felt convinced that whenever, or wherever, he might see them again, he would be able instantly to recognize them. What was this peculiar formation ? It was this : Behind the ear there was no back part of the head, or, in the parlance of phrenologists, "no development of the animal passions." There was, also, another peculiarity. The skin of that portion of the neck which was visible was as smooth and white as that of some delicate high-born damsel ; while the ear, in its size, and the delicacy of its shape, was far more like that of a woman than a man. In stature, this gentleman of the road was about five feet ten inches in height, and rather slight in figure. His dress was not like that in which Jack Sheppard, Tom King, and other notorious highwaymen of by-gone days used to delight, but more like that of a country

squire, with the exception of a slouched hat, and a short black cloth cloak, such a one as Hamlet usually wears on the stage.

The banker was not asked for his watch or other valuables. As soon as his purse was pocketed, the postboy was commanded by the highwayman to "go on." It was about ten miles from Woodstock that this robbery took place; and as soon as it had been completed, as above described, the two gentlemen of the road leaped their horses into a field, and galloped across the country towards a town some six miles distant. The season of the year was winter—the hour, half-past three in the afternoon—and by the time that they arrived in the town towards which they galloped it was quite dark.

The banker had very urgent business in Woodstock, and was anxious to return to town with all speed; so urgent, indeed, was this business, that he would not speak about the robbery lest it should break in upon his time, which was of so much consequence. He was, therefore, silent on the subject until after his arrival in London, on the following day, when a formal intimation of the facts was forwarded to the police authorities, who inserted the usual advertisement in the "*Hue and Cry*."

The bank to which the gentleman who had been robbed belonged was a bank that issued its own notes, and it was a portion of their notes that had fallen into the hands of the highwayman. Five "fives;" the numbers were known, but the banker, for reasons of his own, did not furnish the police with those numbers. A memorandum, however, was made upon a card, and hung up inside the rails of every little desk in the counting-house—"53-12" to "53-16." Ere long everyone connected with the house, partners, clerks, and even the porters and otherservants, had their numbers by heart, and whenever they saw a "fiver" of the firm, looked into the corner of it instanter. Upwards of a year elapsed ere one of these lost ones was handed across the counter.

“53-14” came in one morning amongst a roll of other notes—representing a very large sum of money—as a payment from a banking-house in the west end of London. In pursuance of instructions that had been given in respect to this matter, the clerk who received “53-14” said nothing, but took it quietly to the partner from whom it had been stolen. Mr. Binkie examined it very minutely, and, with a smile on his countenance—for the hand, and the neck, and the ear, and the form of the highwayman came very vividly before him at that moment—ejaculated “Humph!” This note had evidently travelled a good deal since the day that it was stolen. It was crumpled, worn, and almost filthy; but there was only *one* name written upon the back of it—“William Giles.” If the present detective force had been then in existence, it would have been sufficient to have handed the note over to one of the inspectors; but the force did not then exist, and the banker was therefore induced to institute, by private means, those inquiries which he deemed necessary. The great questions were—“Who is William Giles? Where did he get this bit of paper from? When? How?”

The bankers from whom it was received in payment had received it from another banker, who had taken it from a banker in the country, who had received it from a grazier, who took it from a butcher in Gosport in part payment of some sheep. The butcher when the note was shown to him by a clerk of the banking-house of Binkie and Co.—a Mr. Martin—remembered it perfectly, “owing to the name of ‘Giles’ on the back of it, and a cross in red ink, which he had himself made upon it; likewise a stain, which was caused by its falling on a bit of fat, when the gentleman who gave it him threw it on the block in payment of his bill.”

“And what was the gentleman’s name?” inquired Mr. Martin.

“His name, sir? Why, Mr. Grafton, who lives up here.”

“And who is Mr. Grafton?”

"A gentleman of large property, and a nephew of Lord Banetree."

Mr. Martin waited upon Mr. Grafton; and, exhibiting the five-pound note, represented what the butcher had stated. "It is perfectly true," replied Mr. Grafton; "I did pay him that note. I remember the note perfectly; it was in my possession for several weeks."

"Do you know from whom you took it, sir?"

"Yes; from the landlord of a hotel in Bath. He gave it to me as part of the change for a twenty-pound note, after deducting the amount of his bill."

"Have you any objection to give me a letter to the landlord, sir?"

"Not the least." And Mr. Grafton sat down and wrote, not exactly a letter, but a declaration, which answered the same purpose. Armed with this document, Mr. Martin journeyed to Bath, saw the landlord, presented Mr. Grafton's declaration, and produced the five-pound note.

The landlord also "remembered the note perfectly;" and had, he said, a reason for so doing, which was this: that a tradesman in the town had refused to give gold for it, because he thought the firm that issued it was rather shaky.

"Shaky!" exclaimed Mr. Martin, rather indignantly. "Really, sir, I am at a loss to—"

"Well, I hope you will excuse me, sir, if I have given you any offence," said the fat, jovial, and good-tempered landlord. "I intended no offence, I assure you, sir. You asked me for particulars, and I have given you one, at all events."

"And may I ask from whom you received the note, sir?"

"Yes, sir, from a gentleman."

"What gentleman?"

"The gentleman whose name is written on the back of the note. You must not be offended, but to tell you the truth, I at that time had some misgivings about the firm—

for rumours were abroad, sir—and I took the note from Mr. Giles, who was staying here for several days with a friend of his, on the express condition that if the firm failed before I parted with it, he would consider himself my debtor for the sum. But, sir, I took four other 5*l.* notes, similar to this, from Mr. Giles."

"And what has become of these notes?"

"I parted with them in the usual course of business, sir. They are not forgeries, I hope?"

"Oh, dear, no. Were they new when you received them?"

"To the best of my recollection, they were. At all events, they were not so dirty as this is."

"And who is Mr. Giles?"

"Well, sir, he was a gentleman who came and stayed here for some days with a friend."

"And what is Mr. Giles?"

"Well, I should say he was a gentleman of independent means, and one who lived up to his income."

"And where does he reside?"

"By referring to my books, I can tell you, sir; for, previous to going away he, at my request, left his address. Yes; here it is. 'George Giles, Esq., Eagle Lodge, near Exeter, Devon.'"

"What kind of a person was Mr. Giles?"

"Well, sir, I have told you that he was a gentleman."

"But are you sure that he was a gentleman?"

"For twenty-one years, sir, I was the head butler of a nobleman of distinction, who entertained, both at his town house, and at his country seat, the best society in the kingdom; and since his lordship's death I have been the landlord of this hotel, which is not the smallest in the place, sir. Now, with that amount of experience, I think it would be very hard indeed if I did not know a gentleman when I spoke to him, or he spoke to me. Yes, sir, Mr. Giles *was*, and, if living, *is* a gentleman; well born and well bred, sir.

If he had represented himself to me as a duke or a marquis, I should not have doubted his word for one moment. His conversation, manners, bearing, and address, sir, were quite sufficient for me."

"But the name of Giles is not a particularly aristocratic one," suggested Mr. Martin.

"Perhaps not, sir," replied the landlord. "But, as families now intermarry, there is not much in names, sir. There is, at this moment, in the house a gentleman whose name is Smith, sir. Nevertheless, he is, to my knowledge, the grandson of one of England's proudest dukes. Names, sir? Why, the name of the boots of this hotel (and I have seen his baptismal register) is Augustus Philip Howard, and that of the head waiter, Alfred Montmorenci. Howard's father was a shoemaker; Montmorenci's a small green-grocer, who lived in Black Boy Alley all his life."

Mr. Martin having thanked the landlord for his information, and having dined at the hotel, took a post-chaise and departed for Exeter, where he inquired for Mr. Giles. No one had heard of such a gentleman in the neighbourhood. Eagle Lodge? there was no such place.

The clue to the discovery having ended at this point, Mr. Martin returned to London, and detailed to his employers the particulars of his journey. When Mr. Binkie had heard the description given of Mr. Giles, he grinned sardonically, and exclaimed: "Humph! I thought as much. A gentleman, eh?" Another year passed away, and all hope of discovering by whom he had been robbed had departed from the breast of the banker, when one afternoon, while walking up New Bond Street, he saw before him a gentleman-like looking person, but whose ear and neck (the back part thereof) made a great impression upon him. He followed this person, and was often as close to him as possible —so close, that he could distinctly see the texture of his skin. When in Piccadilly, nearly opposite to the White Horse, the banker made an experiment: "Mr. Giles!" said

he, in a gentle tone. The person whom he was following started suddenly, turned round, looked at the banker with a rather vacant countenance, and then walked on. The banker now more boldly accosted the person, of whose identity he was now quite certain. Walking by his side, he said : “ Surely, Mr. Giles, you remember me ?”

“ No, sir, I do not,” was the reply, and he stopped.

“ No ?”

“ No, sir ! You have the advantage of me.”

“ Perhaps so, in this crowded street under existing circumstances ; but the last time we met, Mr. Giles, *you* had the advantage—and a very decided advantage—over me. You then offered me your hand. Will you now accept mine ?” and the banker removed his glove, and extended his palm.

“ I tell you, sir, that you are mistaken,” said the person accosted, folding his arms tightly across his chest. “ In the first place, sir, how do you know that I am Mr. Giles ?”

“ That is the very point. Satisfy my curiosity. Tell me who you really are, and I promise you, on my word and honour as a gentleman, that our acquaintance here shall end, never again to be renewed.”

“ What do you mean, sir ?”

“ What I have said. But I have another condition to impose—which is, that you restore to me a small silver coin of the reign of Charles I., which was for many, many years in my possession, and subsequently came into yours. It has a hole in it, and the value of the coin is, intrinsically, less than sixpence.”

“ The only conclusion, sir, at which I can arrive is, that you are a maniac ; and if a constable were at hand, I should not hesitate to give you into custody.”

“ Then I will be beforehand with you,” cried the banker ; and seizing the person whom he addressed by the collar of his coat, he held him firmly, calling aloud, “ Help—help—help ! A thief—a thief—a thief !”

A crowd was speedily collected around them ; and ere

long a constable came up and took "the gentleman" into custody on a charge of highway robbery. Upon being asked his name, he remarked, pointing to the banker, "This person says my name is Giles. Be it Giles."

On the following day there was an examination at the police-office in Bow Street. The banker, who was permitted to look at the right hand of the accused, swore positively that he was the person who, upon a certain date, had stopped him on the king's highway, and took from him a purse containing 70*l.* in bank-notes and gold, and a silver coin of the reign of Charles I. On being asked for his address, the prisoner declined to give any, which was considered very much against him; and he was remanded, in order that the evidence of the landlord at the Bath hotel might be taken. There was another circumstance, besides his refusal to give an address, which was construed greatly to his prejudice, or to use a more homely phrase, which "told against him." When apprehended he had upon his finger a signet ring; but between Piccadilly and the lock-up he had contrived to part with it. When searched, a pocket-book was found upon him, and a purse. The former contained a number of memoranda in cipher, and unintelligible to those who examined them; the latter contained two bank-notes of 10*l.* each, four guineas in gold, and a few shillings in silver. His linen, which was unmarked, and his apparel, including his hat and his boots, were such as only gentlemen in those days ever dreamt of wearing. To use a popular expression current that day in the police-office—"Whether he had faked the swag or not, he was a tip-top nob, and no flies about it."

The moment that the landlord of the Bath hotel was confronted with the prisoner, he unhesitatingly recognized him as Mr. Giles, the gentleman from whom he had taken the bank-notes, the one of which (No. 53-14) was then produced in court. The magistrate having no kind of doubt about the case, fully committed the prisoner, "George

Giles," to take his trial at the Old Bailey at the ensuing sessions.

CHAPTER II.

FOR six long weeks George Giles lay in the cells of Newgate. At the expiration of that time the day of trial came, and he was arraigned in due form. He had no counsel, but defended himself most ably. No lawyer could have argued more adroitly, or more successfully, several technical objections that he took—especially that one which related to a proposal to screen his face with a mask (similar to that which it was alleged he had worn), while the prosecutor looked at the back of his head and his neck. "If," said he, "the prosecutor will swear that the mask now produced in court is the identical mask which was worn by the man who robbed him, I have no objection; on the contrary, I will gladly put it on my face; but if he cannot so swear, I ask, in the name of justice and of decency, that it may be removed from my sight, and that of the Bench and the jury."

"But, my lord," urged the counsel for the prosecution, "it is just such a mask as was worn by the highwayman."

"And I," exclaimed the prisoner, "may be just such a man as the man who robbed the prosecutor; but still *not* that man."

Nor was his speech to the jury less ingenious than his objections taken during the trial. "As for not giving any address," said he, "I would ask you, gentlemen of the jury, whether there is no shame attached to even an accusation of this kind, false though it may be? Innocent as I am, and certain as I am of being acquitted, I would not for the whole world have my relations and friends know that I have been *tried* for such an offence. Nor would I have my enemies—and every man has enemies in this world—to know it. For, would they ever fail to remind me of it?"

Is there one amongst you, gentlemen, who can lay his hand on his heart and say : ‘I have no enemy who would rejoice on hearing that I have been placed in so awful a predicament?’ The question is not, who I am, or where I live; but, am I the man who robbed the prosecutor? The shape of the back part of my head has been dwelt upon. There are thousands of men in this kingdom, and I doubt not, many in this court, at this moment, whose heads are shaped like mine. But the prosecutor has only noticed *two*: the head of the man who robbed him, and the head of myself. A comparison of handwriting is not allowed in law, I believe. Is the life of a British subject, then, to depend on comparing the shape of his head, or a portion thereof, with that of some criminal? Let reason, justice, and humanity, rise triumphantly, and with one voice forbid it! Great stress has also been laid upon the scar or mark upon my right hand. Is there a man in this court, or in this kingdom, who is devoid of some scar or mark on his right hand—a scar resulting from some slight wound inflicted in his childhood, or boyhood, or in later life? I will be bound that there is not *one*! We have all cut ourselves or burnt ourselves, at some period of our lives. Remember that the penalty of the crime of which I stand accused is death. Can you conscientiously consign a fellow-creature to so fearful a doom as that of being hanged by the neck in public, on evidence so flimsy and so unsatisfactory as that which you have heard this day? The learned counsel has said to you in his address: ‘Let the prisoner account to you for the possession of the bank-notes which he endorsed, and passed to the landlord of the hotel.’ For the past six weeks I have been shut up in a dark cell in Newgate. What opportunity have I had to discover the gentleman from whom I received them more than twenty months ago, at Doncaster—a gentleman whom I never saw before, and have never seen since—a gentleman whom I met in the ring, and with whom I betted on a horse-race? I won his

money, and he paid me. Possibly this unsupported testimony of one who avows that he is a gambler may not meet with much consideration, but I desire to impress upon you that gambling is not a crime in the eye of the law: and that even royalty has pecuniary speculations touching turf events. The last, and withal the weakest, point to which I have to direct your attention is this: It has been urged against me that no Mr. Giles, of Eagle Lodge, could be found. There was no such a person, and no such a place! What are the facts? A banker's clerk—and you will bear in mind what he admitted on cross-examination—goes down to Exeter, puts up at an hotel, asks the landlord of that hotel or tavern if he knows Mr. Giles, of Eagle Lodge? The landlord says 'No.' He (the banker's clerk) then talks to the "boots," and to the stable-boys, and they have no knowledge of such a person, or such a place. He then wanders about the town and inquires of several tradesmen, who can afford him no sort of information. Whereupon he comes back perfectly satisfied that there is no Mr. Giles, and no Eagle Lodge; just as if it were absolutely essential that any gentleman going to reside in the neighbourhood of Exeter must register his existence with the landlord and servants of the Old Dun Cow, or those few tradespeople to whom the banker's clerk thought fit to confine his inquiries."

The judge summed up, rather in the prisoner's favour than otherwise, and the jury retired to consider their verdict. They were absent from four o'clock until a quarter to eleven, when they returned into court, and, amidst breathless silence, delivered their verdict of—"Guilty!" The judge, who seemed somewhat surprised, did not condemn the prisoner to be hanged, but ordered the sentence of "death" to be "recorded" against him. This was tantamount to transportation beyond seas for the term of his natural life.

After a brief probationary (?) period on board of a hulk,

George Giles was "drafted," and placed on board a convict ship, bound for Sydney, New South Wales.

Although the landlord of the Bath hotel has testified to the convict's manners, bearing, and address, his personal appearance has not yet been described. Be it known that he had violet-coloured eyes, which had an extremely soft and sweet expression; an aquiline nose, and a well-formed mouth, in which were set a row of pearly-white teeth; a rather prominent chin, and a neck most exquisitely moulded. His hair was of a chestnut colour. Giles was, in short, not only a very handsome, but a very peculiar-looking person; and his age, at the time of his conviction, was not in excess of twenty-five years. The doctor of the ship in which Giles was borne away from the land of his fathers to the far-distant penal colony, took what is called a great fancy for the young man, and contrived, during the five months that they were at sea, to make his position as little disagreeable to him as possible. This he effected by appointing him to take charge of the cabin in which were deposited the medicine-chests and hospital stores, and suffering him to take his meals and sleep therein, instead of among the four hundred and ninety convicts on board.

"I am very curious to know your history," said the doctor to Giles, one day in private.

"I have none to narrate, sir," was the reply.

"Oh, yes, you have. Come tell it to me. I know what you were transported for, by the muster-roll and a copy of the calendar—the Newgate Calendar. But how came it about? You were guilty, I fancy?"

"Well, sir, I was convicted; and that amounts to the same thing, so far as I am now concerned."

"But, come; tell me. I have read the report of the trial very attentively, and the case appears to me such a strange and such a doubtful one."

"I can tell you nothing in addition to what you have read in that report, sir."

"Oh, yes, you can. Say, now, were you guilty or not?"

"I would rather say nothing about it, sir; but if you press me, I have no hesitation in saying that this is not the hand into which the banker dropped his purse, confidently as he swore to this mark on the ball of my thumb."

"Then you are the other man who was in company of the highwayman?"

"No, I am not, sir."

"Then you are innocent?"

"Again, sir, I implore you not to question me any further on this matter. I am very sensible of your great kindness to me; but I would rather incur your most severe displeasure than prolong this conversation, which is so peculiarly painful to my feelings."

"Very well. But there is one question that I must put to you; and you, I am sure, will not object to answer it."

"What is the question, sir?"

"Was Giles your real name or not?"

"It was not, sir."

"Then what was it?"

"I would rather have my tongue torn out by the roots, sir, than divulge the name of my family, the name under which I was born. Had I been sentenced to be hanged, and if my reprieve and pardon had been faithfully promised me on condition that I would state who I was and by whom begotten, I would have remained silent."

"Let me look at that mark on the ball of your thumb."

"There, sir."

"How was it done? By accident?"

"No, sir."

"How, then?"

"It was burnt in by a gipsy."

"Why?"

"That I hardly know. It was done when I was a child. Others have been branded in this way."

"What others?"

"Ah, sir, you are coming back to the old point. I must decline answering any further questions on the subject."

It was during the administration of General Macquarie, as governor of New South Wales and its dependencies, that George Giles was transported for the term of his natural life; and it was in the autumn of the year 1815 that he arrived in that colony, and was "assigned," in company with two other convicts, to a Captain Bellamy, of the Royal Navy, who had retired from the service, and settled in Australia. Captain Bellamy, who was then about forty-five years of age, was a very extensive grantee, and had, in all, some seventy or eighty assigned servants, the greater portion of whom were employed on an estate which he possessed in the Hawkesbury district, and which estate—with the assistance of an overseer, who had formerly sailed with him as boatswain—he managed himself. On the occasion of having new men assigned to him, it was Captain Bellamy's wont to have "all hands piped" to listen to a short address, which, without variation, he always delivered in the following words:—

"Men! I have called you together to bear witness to the truth of the few observations that I am about to make to these new-comers. I am a strict, but a just master. I feed you well, I clothe you well, and if you are sick you are well attended to; but, at the same time, if you are ever guilty of neglect of your work, fail to be obedient to command, or wanting in respect to myself, or your overseer—by — I flog you well. That's all. Pipe down, Jackson!"

These last words were addressed to the boatswain overseer, who instantly blew a shrill whistle; whereupon the convict servants dispersed and resumed their various labours, leaving the captain, the overseer, Giles and his two companions, in front of the house, which was "the quarter-deck."

"You are labourers, my men?" said the captain, addressing himself to the trio, who had just arrived, and were now standing before him.

"Yes, sir," said two of the men, touching their hats; but Giles spoke not, nor did he make any sign.

"Are you not a labourer, my man?" said the captain to Giles.

"No, sir."

"Indeed! What are you, then?"

"An apothecary, sir."

"An apothecary! I applied for three labourers. However, I ought not to complain, perhaps. Is there nothing that you can turn your hand to, except compounding pills, spreading plaisters, and mixing syrups?"

"I shall be glad, sir, to make myself generally useful."

"Generally useful is such an infernally vague term—I hate it," said the captain, shaking his head. "Let us have something definite. Do you know anything about horses?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, Jackson, suppose we put him in the stables? we want help there."

"Yes, sir," said the overseer.

"Then be it so. By the bye, it strikes me that coach-house door would be none the worse for a little dumb-scraping or a touch of the tar brush; so, to-morrow morning, at sunrise, let him be employed in that manly and wholesome occupation; it will give him an appetite for his breakfast. The others will go into the field, and hoe up their thirteen rood of ground each."

"Yes, sir," said the overseer.

"But before you billet them off, just take their lines, and let me have them before sunset."

"Yes, sir." And then turning to Giles and the others, Mr. Jackson added: "Come along, my lads!"

The overseer led them into a room, where he measured them to a hair. He then took them into the store-room, where he weighed them, marking down the weight of each man in a book. He next commanded them to strip, whereupon he ascertained every mark or scar that each man

had upon his person, noting at the same time, the colour of each man's hair and eyes, shape of the nose, complexion, &c., &c. This done, he served out to each person ten pounds of seconds flour, ten pounds of salt beef, a quarter of a pound of brown sugar, two ounces of tea, two ounces of soap, and a 'fig' (one ounce) of colonial tobacco. "That's your week's rations," said he. "And now for your toggery. Here you are! one duck frock, one cotton shirt, one pair of duck trousers, one pair of boots, one straw hat, and one black handkerchief. And let me recommend you all to come as clean and neat as possible on Sundays to Divine Service into the captain's verandah; for there's nothing that his excellency is more particular about than the uniform appearance of all his crew on the Sabbath-day; and any of you as doesn't know how to tie a running knot, or what they calls a sailor's knot, in your neck-handkerchief, if you'll come to me in my leisure moments, I'll show you how to do it. And, lastly, about your sleeping. Here's a bed and a blanket a-piece for you. You (he addressed himself to Giles) as is going into the stables, will sleep in the stables; you as is going to work in the fields, will shake yourselves down along with those as works in the fields. You will find yourselves pretty comfortable here, I dare say. What the captain told you is very true. He is a strict, but a just man. I have known him ever since I was a little boy. He was only a middy when I fust sailed with him; and he was just the same then that he is now; not a bit of difference, only older, and a little more cantankerous, of course."

Let us now leave "Giles" on Captain Bellamy's estate, within Hawkesbury district, and change the scene to Europe.

One forenoon, about a year and six months after the trial and conviction of Giles, a gentleman called at Mr. Binkie's bank, and presented, across the counter, a cheque for 500*l.* Mr. Martin, whose name has been already mentioned in connection with this narrative, and who was the cashier of

the bank, inquired of the gentleman how he would receive the money ?

" All in bank-notes, except 10*l.* in gold," was the reply. Mr. Martin counted out the notes, and was about to shovel the gold into the hand of the gentleman, when, to his surprise, he beheld on the ball of his thumb exactly the same mark as that upon which had chiefly rested the conviction of another person. Mr. Martin was rather startled, and, putting down the shovel, said—' Would you have any objection, sir, to write your name on the back of this cheque ?'

" Have you any doubt as to the signature ? Do you believe it to be Lord Beckthorpe's signature or not ?" was the abrupt reply.

" I knew it to be Lord Beckthorpe's signature, sir."

" And is it not payable to bearer ?"

" Yes, sir."

" Then why should I endorse it ? What right have you to ask me to endorse it, sir ? It is an impertinence to me as well as to Lord Beckthorpe. What right have you, pray, to know or to inquire the name of every or any person to whom a nobleman or gentleman thinks proper to give a cheque ? If my banker took such a gross liberty with me, I'd never rest till I ruined him. Now, sir, I demand that money ; and, listen to me, if it is not paid instanter, I will, within one hour from this time, post my Lord Beckthorpe at every club in London, as a defaulter in the payment of his debts of honour, leaving you and he to settle and reconcile that unpleasantness between you." Hearing these violent words uttered in a loud and impious tone of voice, Mr. Binkie left his seat in the bank parlour, and was advancing to the counter, when Mr. Martin met him and said, in a whisper : " Look at his right hand, sir." Mr. Binkie had a very good opportunity of doing this, for the gentleman, when he repeated energetically : " Do you honour Lord Beckthorpe's cheque on demand, payable to bearer, or do you not ?" stretched forth

his palm across the counter, and within two feet of Mr. Binkie's eyes.

"Oh, yes, we honour it, sir," said Mr. Binkie, now taking the case out of Mr. Martin's hands. "By all means, and it shall be paid; but, sir, it is sometimes usual with bankers to inquire *who* is the bearer, and it has long been a custom of ours to do so."

"Curse your customs!" cried the gentleman, who was evidently a man of violent and excitable temperament, and of an ungovernable will; "what do I care for your customs?"

"Pray be calm, sir," said Mr. Binkie, observing the back part of the gentleman's head, and feeling rather uncomfortable whilst he did so. "The money shall be paid; but—" he stammered.

"Curse the money!" said the gentleman, and turning swiftly on his heel, and leaving the notes, gold, and cheque upon the counter, he hurried into the street, mounted a spirited horse, which was held by a groom at the door, and rode away, at a swift pace, from the city towards the west end of the town.

Mr. Binkie and Mr. Martin looked at each other in profound astonishment. The former pressed his head between his palms, and said: "I am bewildered!" The latter looked up at the ceiling, then down at the floor, and uttered, moodily: "It is incomprehensible!" Both the banker and his head clerk (for to that post Mr. Martin had been appointed) were half stupefied, and remained so until half-past two o'clock, when Lord Beckthorpe, in a towering passion, and accompanied by two other gentlemen, constituents of the bank, rushed into the counting-house, and very abruptly aroused them.

"What's the amount of my balance here?" gasped Lord Beckthorpe, addressing Mr. Martin.

"Will you walk into the parlour, my lord, and take a chair?"

“No! What’s my balance?”

Here Mr. Binkie came out, and timidly approaching the counter, where stood Lord Beckthorpe, with a countenance distorted with vehement passion, and with compressed lips.

“Lord Beckthorpe,” Mr. Binkie began, “I am very sorry——”

“I do not want any expressions of your regret, sir,” replied his lordship, cutting short the banker’s speech; “I want my money!” Then addressing himself to Mr. Martin, he demanded: “Can’t you tell me the amount of my balance? Quick, sir! Time is precious with me—my credit, my honour is at stake, sir!”

“The balance in your favour, my lord,” said Mr. Martin, trembling, “is 9,214*l.* 16*s.* 3*½d.*”

“Then just give it to me as short and as sharp as possible, in Bank of England notes and gold. I’ll not have any of your notes. I’ll draw a cheque for it;” and he did so.

“Yes, my lord,” and Mr. Martin counted out the money—nervously, but with accuracy, even to the 3*½d.*

“I believe I have some trifle here?” said one of the gentlemen who had come to the bank with Lord Beckthorpe. “Let me know what it is, and give it to me.”

“Yes, Sir John,” said Mr. Martin, referring to his books; “your balance is 11,219*l.* 4*s.* 1*d.*”

“Oh! Thank you. I did not think there was so much left. Well, let me have it, or rather pay it into Skinner and Flynte’s, to my credit.”

“Yes, Sir John. It shall be done.” Sir John, was Sir John Nemberpage, then in his thirty-fifth year.

“I am afraid I have but deuccel little to take from you, said the other gentleman (a rather elderly person), who had come with Lord Beckthorpe.

“I will see, general!” replied Mr. Martin; and then turning to letter “L,” he read aloud—“General Leicesterfield—balance 624*l.* 18*s.* 9*d.* How will you have it?”

“The six hundred in notes, and the rest in coin.”

"*Our notes, general?*"

"No. Bank of England."

When the money was paid to each constituent, Mr. Binkie addressed them as follows : "I dare say you were under the impression that this bank was not solvent, and hence the demur to pay the cheque presented this morning without any endorsement. Such is not the case, as you have discovered. I had my reasons for requiring the name of the person who presented the cheque."

"The person, sir!" exclaimed Sir John Nemberpage. "You mean the gentleman—my brother."

"Indeed, Sir John?"

"Yes, sir," interposed Lord Beckthorpe, "and my first-cousin."

"Indeed, my lord? Then, why on earth should he refuse to endorse the cheque, or give me his name and address?"

"Because you had no right to ask it, and he did not choose, I suppose," suggested General Leicesterfield.

"Well, it is done, and it cannot be helped," said Mr. Binkie, wiping the glasses of his spectacles with a yellow silk pocket-handkerchief. "But there was something so very odd—" here Mr. Binkie paused.

"About what?" inquired Lord Beckthorpe.

"About this business, my lord."

"What the deuce do you mean, sir?"

"Nothing, my lord."

"Well, then, let me give you the same advice that Charles James Fox once gave to a drivelling ass in the House of Commons, who told him that he meant nothing. '*The next time that you mean nothing, say nothing.*'" And, with this insulting observation, his lordship walked out of the banking-house, followed by his companions, Sir John Nemberpage and General Leicesterfield.

Mr. Binkie had a brother-in-law, a Mr. Lyttlecooke, who was one of the most eminent king's counsel of the day.

Mr. Binkie visited his brother-in-law, at his chambers, and communicated to him all the particulars connected with the presentation of the cheque, and the subsequent visit of his constituents. "And, to tell you the real truth," concluded Mr. Binkie, "I am now by no means satisfied that the man Giles was the person who robbed me on the highway."

"But it is too late to think about that now. One man has been already tried, convicted, and transported for the offence. Take my advice, and banish the whole affair from your mind.

"But I cannot do so. You see, I swore so positively to Giles, and now the horrible reflection is continually haunting me that I may have been mistaken."

"Apart from the mark on the hand (the half-moon on the ball of the thumb), and the shape of the back of the head—does this half-brother of Sir John Nemberpage in any way resemble the man Giles?" asked Mr. Lyttlecoke.

"Not in the least!" returned Mr. Binkie. "I never beheld two faces so unlike each other. The one (Giles) was a handsome fellow. The other is positively ugly. He has a low forehead, jet-black eyes, a snub nose, and long upper lip, irregular, rabbitte teeth, and what is called 'underhung.' And they are, besides, so different in manners. There was a gravity about those of Giles. This man's are uncouth and strangely offensive. Oh! how I wish that I had not been so positive!"

"Pooh! pooh! Make your mind easy," said Mr. Lyttlecoke.

"Ah, brother! but what an awful thing if I have been the cause of wrongfully banishing for life an innocent man! Only think of that!"

CHAPTER III.

GEORGE GILES was, on the whole, what used to be termed by the masters of convict servants, a very good man; but on several occasions he misbehaved, and as Captain Bellamy

never looked over but one offence—namely, the first—he was several times punished ; that is to say, flogged. For five years and some months he was with Captain Bellamy, and during that period was seen by the captain every day. Indeed, he was almost constantly in the captain's sight; for in addition to helping in the stables, he waited at table, cleaned the knives, plate, boots, and shoes, and brushed the captain's clothes. Captain Bellamy was not a married man; but he had two convict women assigned to him, to do the washing, keep the furniture clean, attend to the dairy, and cook. One day, Giles, while assisting these women to move a heavy sideboard, intimated that it was his intention to destroy himself shortly. The women laughed at Giles ; but before the week was out Giles was absent at “quarters”—to which all hands were shrilly “piped” by the boatswain-overseer, at daylight every morning.

“Where's Giles, Jackson?” asked Captain Bellamy of the overseer, when he missed Giles from his place in the avenue of convicts, through which the captain walked, looking into the face of every man present.

“I don't know, sir,” replied Jackson.

“Well, wind the call again : and if he doesn't tumble up, when you have told the men off, ascertain the reason of his absence. Perhaps he is sick.”

Here Jackson “winded” (blew) the call with such force that it might have been heard by any one (except those very deaf indeed) three miles distant, whilst to those within fifty yards it was literally ear-splitting. But Giles did not hear it ; or if he did, he did not answer to it.

The overseer, having assigned to every man his day's work respectively, went to hunt up the missing Giles. He was not in his bed, nor had his bed been slept in ; nor had Giles's clothes been taken away, except those articles of apparel which he wore when last seen. Everything that he owned was in his deal chest.

“Very strange!” said the captain, when these matters

were reported to him. "Very strange! He cannot have turned bushranger?"

"Hardly that, sir. I don't think he was a man of that sort," said the overseer.

Here one of the convict women who was sweeping the floor of the room, made bold to speak as follows:—

"If you please, sir, he told us—me and Caroline—the other day, that he was going to commit sooercide."

"Suicide!" said the captain; "why should he do that? He seemed very happy here. But whether he has committed suicide or has run away, I must, in the execution of my duty, report him to the authorities as having absconded. Where are his lines, Jackson?"

"Here, sir," replied the overseer, taking from his pocket a greasy book.

"Read them out, and I'll write them down."

Jackson dictated as follows—and the captain, in a very legible hand, transcribed his words on a sheet of foolscap:—

Name, George Giles. Ship, Phoenix. Height, 5 feet 9 $\frac{1}{2}$. Weight, on the first of last month, 10st. 2lb. 2oz. Hair, chesnut. Eyes, dark blue. Nose, beaky. Teeth, regular and white. Complexion fair, but rather sunburnt. Marks, scar on ball of right thumb, resembling a half-moon; large black mole on left chest, the letters "L. N." pricked into the right arm, just above the elbow-joint, and over them a dolphin.

"Has he ever been in the Navy, Jackson?" said the captain, on hearing of the dolphin and the letters.

"Lord bless your honour! no, sir," replied Jackson. "He does not know a marlinspike from a maintupbowlin. Had 'em done by some of the convicts coming out, I suspect, in token of some sweetheart as he left behind him, when he'd the herring-pond to come across, sir."

The description of the missing convict was forwarded to Sydney, and ere long appeared in that portion of the Government "Gazette" which was devoted to the description of convicts who had absconded from their masters.

Ten years had elapsed, and nothing had been heard of Giles. Captain Bellamy had, after a while, begun to think

that the man had committed suicide by throwing himself into the River Hawkesbury, which flowed through his estate; and, by degrees, had ceased to think any more about him.

Mr. Binkie, the prosecutor of Giles, had departed this life; Mr. Martin also had paid the debt of nature; so had Sir John Nemberpage, if nature will accept as payment of her debt a life sacrificed in a duel, arising out of a disreputable quarrel over a card-table. What had become of Sir John's brother (Charles), whose person and character, to some small extent, have been described in these pages, no one knew. He had disappeared very mysteriously in the latter part of the year 1820, and in 1823 the title and the estates devolved upon Lucius, the youngest son of the late Sir Jasper Nemberpage. In 1824, this youngest son, who had been travelling abroad (with his brother Charles, it was said), returned to England, and claimed, and was at once invested with his rights. He became, of course, Sir Lucius Nemberpage, and went to reside at the family seat, Nemberpage Hall, in the county of Huntingdon; and shortly after succeeding to his title and estates, he married the only daughter and heiress of Sir Charles Limbersault, by whom, in the course of seven years, he became the father of four children, three boys and a girl. It was said, or rather rumoured, that in early life Sir Lucius had been very wild and very gay; but no one could now complain of him on that score. He was a good husband, a good father, and a good landlord; in short, in every respect and relation of life, Sir Lucius Nemberpage was an excellent and exemplary member of society. He was always the first man in the county to befriend the poor, relieve the oppressed, and comfort the sorrowful. His popularity was unbounded, and deservedly so. Lady Nemberpage, who, by hearsay, was a really beautiful woman, was likewise greatly respected and beloved by all who had the good fortune to know her. The children also of Sir Lucius and Lady Nemberpage were objects of admiration and regard in the county; they were

so handsome, so healthy, so well-behaved, and so prettily-mannered, and yet so natural in all their sayings and doings. In fact, they were well-educated, but not *over-educated*, children.

In the year 1836, Captain Bellamy, R.N., of Bellamy Castle, New South Wales, revisited his native land. His object in coming to England was to induce the Government to appoint him governor of New Zealand, Swan River, Port Phillip, or some other settlement at the Antipodes. The old gentleman was an uncle of mine (I must now speak in the first person), my late father having married his only sister. My mother and myself at the time of my uncle's arrival were living on a little ancestral estate, or piece of land, containing some sixty or seventy acres. My uncle had not corresponded with my mother for many years; but somehow or other, soon after he landed in England, he discovered her address, and wrote to inform her of his arrival. She invited him to spend as much of his time as possible with us; and he came, accompanied by his boatswain-over-seer, Mr. Jackson, who acted as his valet, toady, and shadow, and whom my uncle would, I am perfectly satisfied, have recommended as his colonial secretary, had the Government fallen in with his views. I could not help liking my uncle, his features were so like those of my mother and of my grandfather, whose portrait occupied the place of honour in our snug but unpretentious dining-room. At the same time, I must confess that my uncle's manners and habits were extremely distasteful to me. The truth is, that he had lived so long in the wilds of Australia, cut off from the world, as it were, and moving only amongst, or rather soaring above, men whom, to use his own words, "he fed well, clothed well, worked well, and flogged well," that he had become utterly forgetful or regardless of most of the amenities of civilized society. For instance, he would sometimes take the charge of our small establishment entirely out of the hands of my mother and myself, and tell

the man-servant who waited at table, that if he had him at Bellamy Castle he would give him seventy-five as “sure as he had a shirt to strip, or a back to bleed.” And for what? For some awkwardness, or other venial offence, of which very few people in this country would have taken any notice. To the women servants, if he were displeased with them, he would not unfrequently say, “If you belonged to me, I’d have all that hair of yours cut off in the Paramatta factory, where they don’t use a comb and scissors, but a gridiron and sheep-shears.” He was, besides, so positive and so overbearing in his manners to myself, that if any one had guaranteed to me the possession at his death, of all the wealth which he was supposed to possess—and really did possess, on the condition that I would live in the same house for a year with him, I would not have been a party to the agreement. As for Mr. Jackson, I should have hated him, so much was he in the way, had it not been for his extraordinary devotion to his master, and a quaintness and sagacity which marked his every speech and action. Nevertheless, he must have been a man devoid of every moral principle, for he had not been a week at Penfield (the name of our little estate) before he had proposed marriage to every female in the establishment, and for aught I know to every female in the neighbourhood, albeit my uncle had more than once told me that Mr. Jackson had left behind him a wife and two children at Bellamy Castle! Happily for himself, perhaps, and, to my idea, happily for those to whom he paid his abrupt addresses, they were uniformly rejected.

It often occurred to me that my uncle, although he had for so many years been a settler, was under the impression that the whole world was a man-of-war, and that the particular part of it on which he happened to tread was the quarter-deck; and that Mr. Jackson also believed the earth to be a man-of-war, and that he was the boatswain of her.

My poor mother, who was one of the gentlest of beings,

was afraid of my uncle, whom she had not seen since the days of her childhood. Indeed, she could hardly remember him; for he was not more than twelve years of age when he was sent to sea, and she was several years younger than he was. During the whole period of his naval career, he had never set foot on English soil. He had either been in South America, or on the African station, or cruising about New Zealand and Bass's Straits, taking bearings and chart-making. The last vessel that he commanded was a small sloop-of-war with a roving commission.

Mr. Jackson, whose constant theme of conversation was "his excellency the captain," informed me that he was "an awfully smart man on board of ship—with the eye of a hawk, but terrible strict, and always acting up to that one motto (motto), 'Feed well, work well, and (if required) flog well.' "

In consequence of my mother's dread of him, I used to keep my uncle as much away from the house as possible, by taking him for a drive, or a ride, or a walk. I could not prevail upon him to visit any of the gentry in our neighbourhood, for he said he was "not wishful to make any acquaintances in England." He had "simply come home for a certain purpose, and, that accomplished, he was off again to the south." One fine morning in the spring, I asked him to accompany me to Newmarket to witness a match of pigeon-shooting. He expressed his readiness, and we set out for the scene of action.

There was a great gathering in the field, which lay at the back of the Rutland Arms, for the match was between two of the most renowned shots in the county, if not in the kingdom. From all parts had gentlemen and others come to witness the contest—from Cambridge, from Bury, from Lynn, from Ely, from Royston, and very many from London. I should say that there were not less than four or five thousand persons on the ground, and amongst them were many individuals of high rank.

When the match was about half over, my uncle seized me suddenly by the wrist, held me in iron grip, looked steadfastly into my eyes, and in a deep, sonorous, but subdued voice, exclaimed—

“GILES! AS I LIVE!”

I could not comprehend him, and asked, with a smile, what he meant.

“William,” he whispered, mysteriously, “there is Giles! over there! I see him, and I’ll have him!” And releasing his hold of my wrist, he made his bony fingers and thumb the shape of an eagle’s claw.

“Whom?” I inquired; “have whom? Who’s your friend? where is he? what has he done?”

“I wish Jackson had come with us.”

“Why?”

“He would soon seize and muzzle him. As it is, I shall have to do it myself, if a constable cannot be found.”

“Do, my dear uncle, be more explicit.”

“You see that man over there.”

“I see a great many; but which man?”

“That man dressed in a suit of blue cloth, with a white hat.”

“Yes; and I know him.”

“Do you? What is his name?”

“Sir Lucius Nemberpage.”

“Sir Lucius fiddlestick! It is Giles—George Giles!”

“I assure you, you are mistaken, uncle. But who may Giles be?”

“My assigned servant, who ran away from me, and who was never heard of afterwards.”

Here I laughed.

“You may laugh,” said my uncle, “but it will not be a laughing matter for that man. He will be hanged as sure as he is alive. That is the penalty, you know, for returning from transportation.”

"Let me repeat, my dear uncle, that you are labouring under a mistake."

"A mistake, sir? Do you mean to tell me that I, who have served on board of ships of war in every grade, from midshipman up to commander—I, who have so vast a memory for persons and things, that I can call up, at any moment, the faces of a whole ship's company, including even the boys and the marines—do you mean to tell me that I cannot identify a man who, for five years, was a servant of mine; who attended to my horses, waited at my table, cleaned my boots, and brushed my clothes? What do you mean, sir?"

"Be not so angry and excited, uncle; and remember we are in a crowd, and not alone. You shall see Sir Lucius at a closer view presently, and then I am satisfied you will acknowledge your error. If you will allow me, I will introduce you to Sir Lucius, as soon as the match is over."

"Introduce me! Introduce me to my own servant! Egad, I'll introduce myself!" and again he made his right hand into the shape of an eagle's claw.

"I implore you not to commit yourself to any unseemly conduct, nor place me in a painfully unpleasant position. If you were to molest or insult Sir Lucius on this ground, the people here assembled would have you seized and conveyed to prison; indeed, the chances are that you would be beaten to death."

"Bah! that's Giles! The more I look at him the more am I convinced. Why, he's bowing in this direction!"

"Yes, and I have returned his bow. Pray be quiet; for I can see that he is coming to speak to me as soon as an opportunity presents itself. Shall I introduce you, or shall I not?"

"Very well, you may."

Sure enough, as soon as an opportunity presented itself, Sir Lucius did approach, shook hands with me, and inquired after the health of my mother, of which I gave a true report.

I then inquired after the health of Lady Nemberpage, and the children, and was rejoiced to hear they were "quite well." These compliments over, I said—"Will you allow me, Sir Lucius, to introduce my uncle, Captain Bellamy, of the Royal Navy?"

The old gentleman, who up to that moment had been unnoticed by Sir Lucius, took off his hat, and made a very profound bow. He then drew himself up to his full height (six feet), and remained uncovered. I could not help observing that Sir Lucius became very pale and agitated, albeit he strove hard to maintain his wonted composure.

"Are you living in this part of the world, Captain Bellamy?" asked Sir Lucius, confusedly.

"No, Sir Lucius," was the reply; "my home is in Botany Bay, and I am only a visitor in Europe. My lodgings are in the neighbourhood of St. Giles's."

"Indeed!" said Sir Lucius, whose face now became crimson-coloured.

"Yes," said my uncle, taking from his pocket his old silver snuff-box, from which he took a pinch, and then held it forth to the baronet. "You take snuff, Sir Lucius?"

The baronet declined, with many thanks.

"But you were addicted to the vice of *taking* it formerly, were you not, Sir Lucius?"

"Occasionally I used to take a pinch."

"I thought so. Yes!" and here my uncle thrust his hands into his trousers-pockets, and shrugged up his shoulders so high that any one, standing behind him at that moment, would have supposed that he had no neck whatever.

Uncomfortable as Sir Lucius appeared in the presence of my uncle, and anxious as he seemed to get away, yet he lingered near us and with us. He was a man who doubts either his liberty to move, or the prudence of absenting himself, lest he should be talked of to his prejudice. This struck me as so very strange that I hardly knew what to

think of the statements made by my uncle. I involuntarily shuddered from head to foot, and hoped in my heart that there was no real foundation for those statements.

The sporting match over, the crowd had dispersed. But Sir Lucius, my uncle, and myself remained in the field. Why, I knew not. A servant, a groom of Sir Lucius', came up, touched his hat, and was about to speak, when Sir Lucius waved him off, saying, "By-and-by; by-and-by. Go home and say I am coming."

After an extremely awkward silence, my uncle exclaimed—"Well, it is time to move," and stepped out in the direction of the hotel. Sir Lucius and myself followed, or rather walked on either side of him.

"Will you take luncheon at the hotel?" I inquired of my uncle.

"Yes," he answered, snappishly.

"Well, I will run on ahead, and order it."

"Ah! not a bad idea. Run away, my boy. Run away! Run away! Run away!" And then, turning to Sir Lucius, he said—"And you may run with him, if you like, sir."

"Thank you, sir," replied Sir Lucius, not impudently, but respectfully and gratefully—more in the tone of a schoolboy who has obtained permission to go fishing, or play at cricket.

After luncheon had been ordered at the hotel, Sir Lucius Nemberpage, trembling from head to foot, laid his hand upon my shoulder, and in a broken voice hurriedly said—"Will you be my friend? May I give you my confidence?"

"I would do anything in the world for you, Sir Lucius," I replied.

"Protect me from your uncle! Let him not speak of me. My heart tells me that he has already been communicative to you. Is it not so?"

I made no reply.

"Protect me from your uncle! You have given me a promise that you will be my friend, and I am certain that

you will do all in your power ; but it will not be an easy matter, for he is a hard, strict, unbending, and—forgive me for saying so—a very vindictive old man. I know him alas ! too well. I know him ! ”

“ But you have never done him any wrong, Sir Lucius ? ”

“ Ah, my dear sir, if you only knew my history, you would pity me from the very bottom of your heart. But hush ! Here comes the old gentleman. That is his foot-step on the stairs—measured, soft, but audible.”

Another moment, and my uncle entered the room. There was at once a dead silence. The waiter ere long came in, bearing on a tray•hissing-hot beefsteaks, and a dish of mealy potatoes.

“ I have no appetite for food,” said my uncle, pacing the room ; “ and I would advise you, William, not to spoil yours for your dinner. It will afford me, however, very great pleasure,” he added, sarcastically, “ to stand behind Sir Lucius’s chair, and, as I am not a proud man, to wait upon him.”

Sir Lucius buried his face in his hands, and groaned heavily.

“ I was mistaken, sir, was I ? ” said my uncle, turning to me. “ I should have been beaten by the mob, and have been carried off to prison, if I had claimed my own property in that field—or, rather, the King’s property—for when he left the island to which he was sent for his life, he escheated to the Crown. I was wrong, was I ? —wrong about a man whose lines are still in my possession, whose lines would at once establish his identity, even if there could be any doubt about my recognition of his person ? But how the deuce he has become Sir Lucius Nemberpage is to me the most mysterious part of the affair. It must have been by some diabolical false representation, which justice demands should be brought to light—justice to some rightful heir to the property and the title of which he has possessed himself. The name of this man is George

Giles, and he has upon his right arm the letters "L. N.," with a dolphin over them, and so pricked in were they, that the devil himself could not get rid of them without cutting off the flesh."

"It is perfectly true that I have upon my right arm the initials of my name, and over them the crest of my family," said Sir Lucius, looking up, meekly, at my uncle. "These initials are the initials of Lucius Nemberpage."

"Worn upon the arm of George Giles! I will swear to you as George Giles in any court of justice; and so will Jackson, as soon as he sees you." Then turning to me, my uncle said—"William, I wish to go home."

He was about to leave the room, but Sir Lucius sprang from his chair, rushed to the door, locked it, and put the key in his pocket.

"Villain! Convict villain!" cried my uncle; "dare you make your own master a prisoner in a public-house?" And with these words he rushed towards the bell-rope; but I intercepted him, and laying my hands upon him with just the force that was required, I begged him to be quiet for a few minutes.

Thwarted in his purpose, whatever it might have been, my uncle's rage knew no bounds. Unable to leave the room, or ring the bell, he stamped, swore, and shouted at the top of his voice—"Fire! murder! thieves!" and then fell senseless on the floor.

The hotel servants, with the landlord at their head, came flocking to the door, which Sir Lucius, in great trepidation, opened, and then requested that surgical assistance might be instantly procured. After a few minutes a doctor came; and on looking at my uncle, informed us that he was dying. He had ruptured, in his rage, a large blood-vessel, and the fluid was issuing copiously from his mouth and nostrils. We removed the old gentleman to a bed in an adjoining apartment, and there, at nine o'clock, he breathed his last.

My mother was much too nervous, and in health far too delicate, to admit of having my uncle's body removed to our home; and arrangements were accordingly made that the corpse should be taken from the hotel to its last resting-place—the family vault of the Nemberpage family, Sir Lucius having begged, with tears in his eyes, that I would consent to this, after making me promise him that I would never mention the facts in my possession, *so long as he or his wife and children were in existence.* Sir Lucius could not attend the funeral; for Mr. Jackson, whom the baronet was very anxious to avoid, claimed a right to be one of my uncle's pall-bearers—and it was a right which no one could reasonably dispute, considering the premises upon which the claim was based. Mr. Jackson alleged that he "had been with the late captain for upwards of forty-four years, and during that time had never been out of his sight for more than a few hours together; that he had attended, and had been faithful, unto him, in sickness and in health; and whether he (Captain Bellamy) had gone up above or down below, he (John Jackson) hoped that, when he died, he should go to the same place, where he would never fail to salute him respectfully as a smart officer, a good man, and a perfect gentleman in every sense of the word."

A few days after my uncle's funeral, and when Jackson had gone to London, *en route* to Sydney, I received a note from Sir Lucius Nemberpage, in these words:—

Dear —,—Come and see me. Lady N. and the children have gone to Ackridge House, to spend the day. You will find me all alone, in the library.

Yours ever,

L. N.

I ordered my horse, and in less than half an hour was at Nemberpage Hall. Sir Lucius looked jaded, ill, and half distracted.

"You have heard only half of a secret," he began, "which has been, and is still, preying on my very soul. It is but fair to you, and to myself especially, that you should know

the whole of the secret; and here, in the most solemn manner, I call the Almighty to witness the truth of what I am about to relate. I was tried, convicted, found guilty, and sentenced to be transported for the term of my natural life, and became the convict-servant of your uncle, the late Captain Bellamy."

"For what offence, Sir Lucius?"

"No criminal offence. No offence whatever. But the offence which was 'proved' against me was that of a highway robbery. But hear me out. You are aware, as is everybody in the county, that my father had three sons, the late Sir John, my brother Charles, and myself. John was four years old when I was born, and Charley two years. We were all wild when we grew towards manhood; and gave my father a great deal of anxiety and trouble. No wonder that he thrashed us so unmercifully when we were boys—and struck us even when we were young men—although I think a milder course of treatment might have been more effectual; and I think it would have been more to our advantage had he taken some pains with our education, instead of not caring, or seeming not to care, whether we learned anything or not. And then he kept us very short of money; even John was stinted frightfully. But, wild as we all then were, John and I were not, by many degrees, so wild as Charley. He was, indeed, something more than wild. It pains me to say so;—but he was a perfect demon. Heaven only knows what crimes he may or may not have to answer for in another world. John and myself were both frightened of Charles, and yet we loved him. He was such a strange admixture of gentleness and ferocity. In the days to which I now refer, our family did not live in this county, but on a small estate in Oxfordshire. This estate on which I now live was rented to a nobleman. My father being a member of parliament for a borough in the neighbourhood, was frequently absent for weeks together in London, and my mother on all

occasions accompanied him. Left alone in the house, we three young men placed no sort of restraint upon our passions and inclinations: we gambled, we drank, and, I am shocked to add, we kept very low company. At this time John was five-and-twenty, Charles twenty-three, and I just of age. Such a den as was that part of the large house which we young men inhabited it would be difficult to describe to you. Suddenly, my brother Charles was never in want of money. He had not only sufficient for his own wants, but his purse was always open to John and myself, when we were destitute of that valuable commodity. There was another young gentleman, the eldest son of a wealthy but penurious squire in the neighbourhood, who also became, suddenly, what is vulgarly called ‘flush of money.’ Charles and the young squire were very great friends; and often, when they produced their well-filled purses, would John and I remark:—‘Why, you must have been upon the highway,’ little thinking of the old proverb, ‘There’s many a true word spoke in jest.’ We led this kind of life for more than two years, when Charles became indisposed; and the doctors recommended that he should have change of air and scene. He begged of me to accompany him, and I most willingly assented. We left home for London, and thence journeyed in a post-chaise to Bath. On the road thither, Charles (wherefore I knew not) suggested that we should travel under false names. I was to be Mr. George Giles, of Eagle Lodge, Devonshire—and he Mr. Francis Preston, of Honiton, in the same county. I was, moreover, appointed the treasurer during the excursion, and had charge of the general purse. After staying at Bath for a few days, we went into Cornwall, where we remained a fortnight with a relation of ours, and then returned to our home. Some two years afterwards I was seized in Piccadilly.” (The reader knows what followed.)

“But why, Sir Lucius,” I asked, “did you not, when apprehended, give your own name?”

"Because that might not have cleared me of the imputation; and, besides, I was afraid of endangering the safety of Charles, who confessed to me afterwards, in New South Wales, that it *was* he who robbed Mr. Binkie on the highway, and what is more, he showed me the silver coin of the reign of Charles I., about which the old banker was so very anxious."

"In New South Wales, Sir Lucius? How came your brother Charles there? Was *he* also transported?"

"Oh dear, no. I had been some four years in Australia before I made Charles acquainted with my fate. My father and mother, thank heaven, never knew what it had been—for they died shortly after I left England. And, if I may believe, as I think I may, what Charles told me, my brother John, also, was ignorant of my fate. The moment Charles received my letter he took a passage in a ship to Sydney, contrived to have several interviews with me, and with him I made my escape from the colony in a vessel bound for Calcutta; thence we came to Havre in a French vessel. It was then that we heard of my brother John's untimely death; and it was there, and not in Rome, as rumour has it, that my brother Charles died and was buried."

"But, Sir Lucius," said I, "you have told me that you were identified—I mean falsely identified—by that mark on the ball of your right thumb. Had your brother Charles that mark?"

"Yes. And I will tell you how both of us came to have it. My mother, who was as kind and as gentle a being as your own mother, was, nevertheless, a very weak and superstitious woman, and was one day told by a gipsy-woman, who came into the yard, that we boys, Charley and myself—our ages were then, respectively, six and four years, and we were sickly—would never thrive, or be fortunate in life, unless we were branded. And the hag was permitted to perform the operation with a silver instrument, which she carried with her for the purpose. It was applied when nearly red-hot, and left this cursed mark upon me."

"And something was said about a mark upon your arm—some letters."

"Yes, they are my initials. See!" (Sir Lucius bared his right arm.) "And this is our crest. When children, my father was afraid that one or other of us might be stolen by the gipsies, who in those days, and especially in Oxfordshire, often carried off the children of rich people; and so he caused us all to be thus marked—disfigured. John had 'J. N.', Charley 'C. N.', and I 'L. N.', with the dolphin above. It was done with Indian ink, gunpowder, and some fine needles, and I can just remember roaring loudly during the operation. And now, I would put one question to you, which I hope you will answer candidly and from your heart. Do you doubt the truth of any of the statements I have made to you in respect to my unfortunate self?"

"No, Sir Lucius," I replied. "I believe them all most implicitly."

"Then I would ask you a great favour."

"What is it?"

"Will you correspond with me when we have gone abroad?"

"Yes; but I hope you will not leave this part of the country."

"I feel," said Sir Lucius, "that I have no right to remain in England, whence I was banished—whether wrongly or rightly it matters not. If I dared, I would settle in Australia; but that is out of the question. There I should be a prisoner of the Crown, or ignominiously hanged, if it were known that I had left the colony. As it is, I and all my family will embark next month for America, where I shall retain the name of my ancestors, but fling away the title."

And Sir Lucius Nemberpage and Lady Nemberpage and their children *did* embark for America; but they never arrived there. The vessel in which they had taken their passage foundered; and save one seaman, who was saved to tell the tale, all on board perished in the ocean!

IV.

TRACKS IN THE BUSH.

A STOCKMAN in my employment was, not many years ago, missing from a cattle-station, distant from Sydney about two hundred and thirty miles. The man had gone one afternoon in search of a horse that had strayed. Not having returned at night or the next morning, the natural conclusion was that he had been lost in the bush. I at once called in the aid of the blacks, and, attended by two European servants (stockmen), headed the expedition. The chief difficulty lay in getting on the man's track; and several hours were spent before this important object was accomplished. The savages exhibited some ingenuity even in this. They described large circles round the hut whence the man had taken his departure, and kept on extending them until they were satisfied they had the proper footprints. The track once found, half a dozen of the blacks went off like a pack of hounds. Now and then, in the dense forest through which we wandered in our search, there was a check, in consequence of the extreme dryness of the ground; or the wind had blown about the fallen leaves of the gigantic gum-trees, which abound in those regions; but, for the most part, the course was straight on end.

We had provided ourselves with flour, salt beef, tea, sugar, blankets, and other personal comforts. These were carried on a horse which a small black boy, of about fourteen years of age, rode in the rear.

On the first day we continued our search until the sun had gone down, and then pitched our camp and waited for daylight. With their tomahawks the blacks stripped off large sheets of bark from the gum-trees, and cut down a few saplings. With these we made a hut; at the opening of which we lighted a fire, partly for boiling the water for

tea, and partly for the purpose of keeping off the mosquitoes. During the night we had a very heavy storm of lightning and thunder, accompanied by torrents of rain. This, I fancied, would render the tracking even more difficult, as the rain was sufficiently heavy to wash out the footprints of a man, had any such footprints been previously perceptible. When the sun arose, however, the blacks, seemingly without difficulty, took up the track and followed it at the rate of two and a half miles an hour until noon, when we halted to take some rest and refreshments. The foot of civilized man had never before trodden in that wild region: which was peopled only with the kangaroo, the emu, the opossum, and wild cat. The stillness was awful; and, ever and anon, the blacks would cooey (a hail peculiar to the savages of New Holland, which may be heard several miles off), but—and we listened each time with intense anxiety—there was no response.

At about half-past three in the afternoon of the second day we came to a spot where the blacks expressed, by gestures, that the missing stockman had sat down; and in confirmation of their statement they pointed to a stone, which had evidently been lately removed from its original place. I inquired by gestures whether we were near the lost man; but the blacks shook their heads and held up two fingers, from which I gleaned that two days had elapsed since the man had been there. At five we came to another spot where the missing stockman had lain down, and here we found his short pipe broken. It would be difficult to describe the satisfaction with which I eyed this piece of man's handiwork. It refreshed my confidence in the natives' power of tracking, and made me the more eager to pursue the search with rapidity. By promises of large rewards, I quickened their movements, and we travelled at the rate of four miles an hour. We now came upon a soil covered with immense boulders. This, I fancied, would impede, if not destroy the track; but this was not the case.

It is true we could not travel so fast over these large round stones ; but the blacks never once halted, except when they came to a spot where they satisfied me the stockman himself had rested. None but those who have been in search of a fellow-creature under similar circumstances can conceive the anxiety which such a search creates. I could not help placing myself in the position of the unhappy man, who was roaming about as one blindfolded, and probably hoping on even in the face of despair. Again we came to a forest of huge gum-trees.

At times the gestures of the blacks, while following the footprints of the stockman, indicated to me that he had been running. At other times, they imitated the languid movements of a weary and footsore traveller. They knew exactly the pace at which the poor fellow had wandered about in those untrodden wilds; and now and then, while following in his wake and imitating him, they would laugh merrily. They were not a little amused that I should be angry at and rebuke such a demonstration.

The sun went down, and our second day's search was ended. Again we pitched our camp and lighted fires. We had now travelled about thirty miles from the station, and the blacks, who had now got beyond the precincts of their district, became fearful of meeting with some strange tribe, who would destroy them and myself. Indeed, if I and my European companions had not been armed with a gun each, and a plentiful supply of ammunition, my sable guides would have refused to proceed any further.

All night long I lay awake, imagining, hoping, fearing, and praying for daylight ; which at last dawned. Onward we went, through a magnificent country, beautifully wooded, and well watered by streams and covered with luxuriant pasture,—all waste land, in the strictest sense of the term. At about ten we came to a valley in which grew a number of wattle-trees. From these trees, a gum, resembling gum arabic in all its properties, exudes in the warm season.

The blacks pointed to the branches, from which this gum had recently been stripped, and indicated that the man had eaten of a pink grub, as large as a silk-worm, which lives in the bark of the wattle-tree. Luckily, he had with him a clasp-knife, with which he had contrived to dig out these grubs, which the blacks assured me were a dainty, but I was not tempted to try them.

On again putting the question to the blacks whether we were near the man of whom we were in search, they shook their heads and held up two fingers. We now came to a clear shallow stream, in which the blacks informed me by gestures that the missing man had bathed; but he had not crossed the stream, as his track lay on the bank we had approached.

After travelling along this bank for about three miles, we came to a huge swamp into which the stream flowed, and ended. Here the footprints were plainly discernible even by myself and my European companions. I examined them carefully, and was pained to find that they confirmed the opinion of the blacks, namely, that they were not fresh. Presently we found the man's boots. These had become too heavy for him to walk in, and too inconvenient to carry, and he had cast them off. Not far from the boots was a red cotton handkerchief, which he had worn round his neck on leaving the station. This, too, he had found too hot to wear in that oppressive weather, and had therefore discarded it.

Following the track, we came to a forest of white gum-trees. The bark of these trees is the colour of cream, and the surface is as smooth as glass. On the rind of one of these trees the man had carved with his knife the following words—

Oh God, have mercy upon me!—T. B.

How fervent and sincere must have been this prayer in the heart, to admit of the hand carving it upon that tree!

Towards evening we came to a tract of country as

barren as the desert between Cairo and Suez; but the soil was not sandy, and it was covered with stones of unequal size. Here the miraculous power of the black man's eye astounded us more than ever. The reader must bear in mind that the lost man was now walking barefooted and tenderfooted, and would naturally pick his way as lightly and as cautiously as possible. Nevertheless, the savage tracked his course with scarcely a halt.

Again the sun went down, and again we formed our little camp on the slope of a hill, at the foot of which lay a lagoon, literally covered with wild ducks and black swans. Some of these birds we shot for food, as it was now a matter of prudence, if not of necessity, to husband the flour and meat we had brought with us.

Another sunrise, and we pursued our journey. Towards noon we came to a belt of small mountains composed chiefly of black limestone. Here the blacks faltered; and, after a long and animated discussion amongst themselves—not one word of which I understood—they signified to me that they had lost the track, and could proceed no further. This I was not disposed to believe, and imperatively signalled them to go on. They refused. I then had recourse to promises, kind words, smiles, and encouraging gestures. They were still recusant. I then loaded my gun with ball, and requested the stockmen to do the like. I threatened the blacks that I would shoot them, if they did not take up the track and pursue it. This alarmed them; and, after another discussion amongst themselves, they obeyed me, but reluctantly and sullenly. One of the stockmen, with much foresight, suggested that we ought to make sure of two out of the six black fellows; for, if they had a chance, they would probably escape and leave us to perish in the wilds; and without their aid we could never retrace our steps to the station. I at once acted on this suggestion, and bound two of the best of them together by the arms, and carried the end of the cord in my right hand.

At four in the afternoon we had crossed this belt of low mountains, and came upon a tract of country which resembled a well-kept park in England. We were all so greatly fatigued that we were compelled to halt for the night—great as was my longing to proceed—a longing not a little whetted by the fact that the blacks now held up only one finger, in order to express that the object of our search was only one day in advance of us.

At midnight the four blacks who were not bound, and who were in a rude hut a few yards distant, came to the opening of my tenement and bade me listen. I did listen, and heard a sound resembling the beating of the waves against the sea-shore. I explained to them, as well as I possibly could, that the noise was that of the wind coming through the leaves of the trees. This, however, they refused to believe, for there was scarcely a breath of air stirring.

“Can it be that we are near the sea-coast?” I asked myself; and the noise, which every moment became more distinctly audible, seemed to reply, “Yes.”

The morning dawned, and to my intense disappointment, I discovered that the four unbound blacks had decamped. They had, no doubt, retraced their steps by the road they had come. The remaining two were now put upon the track, and not for a single moment did I relinquish my hold of the cord. To a certainty they would have escaped, had we not kept a tight hand upon them. Any attempt to reason with them would have been absurd. Fortunately, the boy who had charge of the horse had been faithful, and had remained.

As the day advanced, and we proceeded onward, the sound of the waves beating against the shore became more and more distinct, and the terror of the guides increased proportionately. We were, however, some miles from the ocean, and did not see it until four in the afternoon. The faces of the blacks, when they gazed on the great water, of which they had never formed even the most remote con-

ception, presented a scene which would have been worthy of some great painter's observation.

It was a clear day, not a cloud to be seen in the firmament; but the wind was high, and the dark-blue billows were crested with a milk-white foam. It was from an eminence of some three hundred feet that we looked upon them. With their keen black eyes protruding from their sockets, their nostrils distended, their huge mouths wide open, their long matted hair in disorder, their hands held aloft, their bodies half crouching and half struggling to maintain an erect position; unable to move backward or forward; the perspiration streaming from every pore of their unclothed skin; speechless, motionless, amazed, and terrified, the two inland savages stood paralysed at what they saw. The boy, although astounded, was not afraid.

Precious as was time, I would not disturb their reverie. For ten minutes their eyes were riveted on the sea. By slow degrees their countenances exhibited that the original terror was receding from their hearts; and then they breathed hard, as men do after some violent exertion. They then looked at each other and at us; and, as though reconciled to the miraculous appearance of the deep, they again contemplated the billows with a smile which gradually grew into a loud and meaningless laugh.

On the rocky spot on which we were standing, one of the blacks pointed to his own knees, and placed his forefinger on two spots close to each other. Hence I concluded that the lost man had knelt down there in prayer. I invariably carried about with me, in the bush of Australia, a pocket-magnifying-glass for the purpose of lighting a pipe or a fire; and with this glass I carefully examined the spots indicated by the blacks. But I could see nothing—not the faintest outline of an imprint on that piece of hard stone. Either they tried to deceive us, or their powers of perception were indeed miraculous.

After a brief while we continued our search. The lost

man had wandered along the perpendicular cliffs, keeping the ocean in sight. We followed his every step until the sun went down; then halted for the night and secured our guides, over whom, as usual, we alternately kept a very strict watch.

During the night we suffered severely from thirst, and when morning dawned we were compelled to leave the track for a while, and search for water. Providentially we were successful. A cavity in one of the rocks had been filled by the recent rain. Out of this basin our horse also drank his fill.

I may here mention a few peculiarities of the colonial stock-horse. Wherever a man can make his way, so can this quadruped. He becomes, in point of sure-footedness, like a mule, and in nimbleness like a goat, after a few years of servitude in cattle-tending. He will walk down a ravine as steep as the roof of a house, or up a hill that is almost perpendicular. Through the dense brushwood he will push his way with his head, just as the elephant does. He takes to the water like a Newfoundland dog, and swims a river as a matter of course. To fatigue he seems insensible, and can do with the smallest amount of provender. The way in which the old horse which accompanied me in the expedition I am describing got down and got up some of the places which lay in our track would have astounded every person who, like us, had not previously witnessed similar performances.

We pushed on at a speedy pace, and, to my great joy, the blacks now represented that the (to me invisible) footprints were very fresh, and the missing man not far ahead of us. Every place where he had halted, sat down, or lain down, or stayed to drink, was pointed out. Presently we came to an opening in the cliffs which led to the sea-shore, where we found a beautiful bay of immense length. Here I no longer required the aid of the savages in tracking; on the sand from which the waves had receded a few hours

previously were plainly visible the imprints of naked feet. The blacks, who had no idea of salt water, laid themselves down on their stomachs for the purpose of taking a hearty draught. The first mouthful, however, satisfied them ; and they wondered as much at the taste of the ocean as they had wondered at the sight thereof.

After walking several miles, the rising of the tide and the bluff character of the coast induced us to avail ourselves of the first opening in the cliffs, and ascend to the high land. It was with indescribable pain I reflected that the approaching waves would obliterate the foot-prints then upon the sand, and that the thread which we had followed up to that moment would certainly be snapped. The faculty possessed by the blacks had defied the wind and the rain ; the earth and the rocks had been unable to conceal from the sight of the savage the precise places where the foot of civilized man had trod ; but the ocean, even in his repose, makes all men acknowledge his might ! We wandered along the cliffs, cooeying from time to time, and listening for a response ; but none came, even upon the acutely sensitive ears of the savages. A little before sunset, we came to another opening, leading down to a bay ; and here the track of the lost man was again found. He had ascended and pursued his way along the cliffs. We followed until the light failed, and we were compelled to halt. Before doing so we cooeyed in concert, and discharged the fowling-pieces several times, but without effect.

It rained during the night ; but ceased before the day had dawned, and we resumed our journey. After an hour's walk, we came upon another opening, and descended to the water's edge ; which was skirted by a sandy beach, and extended as far as the eye could compass. Here, too, I could dispense with the aid of the blacks, and followed on the track as fast as possible. Indeed, I and my companions frequently ran. Presently, the lost man's footsteps diverged from the sandy shore, and took to the high land. We had

proceeded more than a mile and a half, when the black boy, who was mounted on the horse, and following close at my heels, called, "Him! him!" and pointing to a figure, about seventy yards distant, stretched upon the grass beneath the shade of a wild fig-tree, and near a stream of fresh water. I recognized at once the stockman; but the question was, Was he living or dead? Having commanded the party to remain where they stood, I approached the body upon tip-toe. The man was not dead, but in a profound slumber; from which I would not awake him. His countenance was pale and haggard, but his breathing was loud and natural. I beckoned the party to approach, and then placed my forefinger on my lips, as a signal that they were to keep silence. Within an hour the man awoke, and stared wildly around him. When he saw us, he was under the impression that he had been lost; but that, while searching for the horse, he had not felt weary, lain down, slept, and had dreamed all that had really happened to him. Thus, there was no sudden shock of unexpected good fortune; the effects of which upon him I at first dreaded.

According to the number of days that we had been travelling, and the pace at which we had travelled, I computed that we had walked about one hundred and thirty-five miles; but, according to a map which I consulted, we were not more than eighty miles distant, in a direct line, from the station. On our way back, it was most distressing to observe the emotions of the stockman when he came to or remembered the places where he had rested, eaten, drunk, or slept, during his hopeless wanderings through the wilds of the wildest country in the known world. The wattle-trees from which he had stripped the gum, the stream in which he had bathed, the swamp where he had discarded his boots, the tree on which he had carved his prayer,—the spot where he had broken his pipe,—that very spot upon which he first felt that he was lost in the bush—these and the poignant suffer-

ings he had undergone had so great an effect upon him, that by the time he returned to the station his intellect entirely deserted him. He, however, partly recovered ; but sometimes better, sometimes worse—in a few months it became necessary to have him removed to the government lunatic asylum.

V.

CAPTAIN KETCHCALFE.

“ONE of those wedding-rings—one of those on the card,” began Mr. Prawnby of Shrimpton, “belonged to a very pretty young girl whose name was Mary Warland. She was only seventeen when she married. I sold her that ring, and she paid me for it with her own hand. I little dreamt then what terrible evidence it would one day give in a court of justice ! Unfortunately for Mary Warland, she married a worthless fellow. He spent the whole of her savings and his own (he had been a butler in a gentleman’s family), and then deserted her. She heard nothing of him for some years, when one morning she received a letter in his own handwriting, and dated Sydney, October 1, 18—. It ran thus :—

“DEAR MABY,—I am alive and doing well. I am a free man, and am earning 2*l.* 10*s.* a-week as head-waiter at the Rose Inn, Castlereagh Street. Forgive me for the past, and come to me. We will yet be happy. I send you 20*l.*, which will enable you to get a steerage passage.”

“Your penitent husband,
JOSEPH MAXTED.”

“Now, sir,” continuod the old man, “many people in Shrimpton advised her to keep the money, and stay where she was. But no. She forgave him, and obeyed his command. She sailed for Sydney, and, after a boisterous passage of six months, arrived in the colony. But she did not see her husband. A few weeks before her arrival he met with a severe accident, and died in consequence of the injuries he received. Being a very hard-

working woman, and carrying, as she did, an honest character in her face, Mary had no difficulty in earning a living. She used to go out washing and ironing for half-a-crown a day, and lived in a little cottage at the back of the barrack square. After a while she became known to the inhabitants of Sydney as ‘Peggy the washerwoman.’ And she was much respected, as she ought to have been. But we must now lose sight of Peggy for a time, and change the scene, sir.

“One of the oldest and most influential families in this county was cursed with a bad boy—a very bad boy. He was a thief. He was cruel—he was malevolent, and criminally mischievous. If he entered a poor man’s orchard stealthily, to rob an apple or pear-tree, and found no fruit thereon, he would take out his knife, sit down, and bark the tree to the bone, near the root, and thus kill it—for the sap could not ascend. To save him from the clutches of the law, his father, Sir Eldred Ketchcalfe, had to pay large sums of money annually to persons who would otherwise have prosecuted him. His name was George—George Ketchcalfe. At thirteen years of age he was sent into the Royal Navy, as a volunteer of the first-class (his uncle was a Lord of the Admiralty). After passing his examination as a midshipman, he was soon gazetted as a lieutenant, and appointed to a line-of-battle ship. He was then only nineteen years of age. Interest, no doubt, did a great deal for him; but it would have been unjust to dispute his merit as a sailor and an officer. A smarter and more daring man never walked a quarter-deck. At the age of twenty-three he was appointed to command an eighteen-gun brig—one of the prettiest and fastest vessels in the Royal service. This was in the year 1820. The brig which he commanded was ordered to proceed to Staten Island. The master of the brig, Mr. John Treadwell, was not only a very skilful navigator, but a very scientific man; and he was specially required by the Admiralty to report concerning ‘the swing-

ing of the pendulum' (a very important question in those days), and to his care were intrusted several chronometers (for the purpose of testing their accuracy and value), besides those which were required for the working of the ship.

"The 'Hecuba'—such was the name of the eighteen-gun brig—did not reach Staten Island. When she had been only three weeks at sea, Captain Ketchcalfe discovered that there was mutiny on board—mutiny fostered by his first-lieutenant—and one morning he suddenly gave the order to 'put the helm up and square the yards;' and returned to the Downs, where the 'Hecuba's' anchor was 'let go.'

"There was an investigation touching the mutiny; but it only ended in a recommendation that the 'Hecuba' should be put out of commission and paid off. This was done accordingly.

"In all there were seven chronometers on board the 'Hecuba,' in Mr. Treadwell's custody; but on the day on which he was required to re-deliver them, only six could be found. One had been abstracted from his cabin. The old man, who was only worth his scanty pay, and who had a wife and three daughters to support, was unable to make the loss good; and insomuch as Captain Ketchcalfe had, when written to on the subject, falsely represented the old master as 'a drunken fellow, on whom no dependence could be placed,' Mr. Treadwell was dismissed the service. Numberless were the petitions addressed to the Lords of the Admiralty by the old man, setting forth the hardness of his case and his extreme poverty. Voluminous the certificates signed by the various captains with whom he had sailed during the past thirty years, each and every certificate bearing testimony to the honesty, sobriety, zeal, &c., of Mr. John Treadwell, late master, R.N. But they were of no avail; and after a while the receipt, even, of a petition from John Treadwell was not acknowledged. Nevertheless, buoyed up by hope, the old man went on petitioning and forwarding certificates; for whenever he chanced to

meet an officer with whom he had sailed, the old man begged his evidence in writing as to character.

“ Six months after the ‘ Hecuba ’ was paid off, Captain Ketchcalfe was appointed to a sloop of war, and took her to the Mediterranean, where he remained for more than two years, and then came home ‘ sick,’ in the hope of getting a larger vessel; a hope which was on the very eve of being fulfilled, when an accident ordained it otherwise.

“ Poor old John Treadwell, in almost soleless shoes, and rusty threadbare coat, was one morning walking down Holborn Hill thinking of his grievances, when he stopped opposite the window of a pawnbroker’s shop, and began abstractedly to look at the various articles exposed to view. Suddenly his eye lighted on a chronometer, which he fancied he recognized as the one that had brought him into so much trouble—which, in fact, had ruined him. To make sure, he entered the shop.

“ ‘ Is that chronometer for sale ? ’ said the old man.

“ ‘ It is, sir,’ was the pawnbroker’s reply.

“ ‘ An unredeemed pledge ? ’

“ ‘ Yes, sir.’

“ ‘ Its price ? ’

“ ‘ 120 guineas.’

“ ‘ May I inspect it ? ’

“ ‘ By all means, sir. You seem to know how to handle a chronometer.’

“ ‘ Yes ; and have handled this one before to-day. Yes, this is the instrument—and a very bad one it is.’

“ ‘ Indeed ! ’

“ ‘ It belongs to the King. It was stolen from one of his Majesty’s ships, lying at anchor in the Downs.’

“ ‘ I am sorry to hear that. It was pledged to me more than two years ago, by a person who said he was the captain of a ship, in bad circumstances—and he certainly looked like a seafaring man, and not at all like a thief. I advanced him 60*l.* upon it.’

“ ‘What sort of a man was he?’

“ ‘Well, I could swear to him anywhere—for we were at least three-quarters of an hour higgling over the sum. He wanted 75*l.*; and I offered 50*l.* at first, and then 55*l.*, and then 60*l.*, beyond which I would not go. He was a short, thick-set, broad-shouldered man, rather bow-legged. Broad flat face, black eyes—black as jet, and very sparkling; one of them had a cast in it, which gave him a very comical expression of countenance. His lower jaw protruded rather, and the bridge of his nose had seemingly been broken.’

“ ‘Good heavens!’ exclaimed the old master, ‘you have described Captain Ketchcalfe!’

“ ‘I have described the man who pawned that instrument.’

“ ‘You must not part with it till I have seen you again. It will be to-morrow, perhaps this evening;’ and with these words the old man left the pawnbroker’s shop, and made the best of his way to the Admiralty, where he sent up his name, and a note, to the First Lord, whom he desired to see on ‘a very serious matter.’ The First Lord sent a verbal message—that he would not see Mr. Treadwell; and the messenger, when asked to take up a second note, refused to do so.

“ ‘Then there is no help for it,’ sighed the old man, and from the Admiralty he wended his way to Bow Street. The presiding functionary at the last-named institution was not so difficult of access as the First Lord. The old man’s statement was taken down; his certificates (he always carried several about with him) carefully inspected; a note made of the name of the pawnbroker, and the name of the famous chronometer-maker in Cornhill; instructions given to two of the most expert officers connected with the court, and old Mr. Treadwell required to be in attendance on the following day at noon precisely.

“ By what means the Bow Street officers obtained Captain Ketchcalfe’s address; how, where, and when they found him; how they placed him face to face with the

man to whom he pawned the chronometer, and who identified him—it signifies nothing. But the next day when old Mr. Treadwell made his appearance in Bow Street, he was informed that the prisoner was in custody, and that as soon as the night charges were disposed of, the case would be called on. And it *was* called on—at ten minutes to one, and at half-past two George Ketchcalfe, captain R.N., was committed to take his trial at the Old Bailey.

"It was now too late for the First Lord to think of devising means for averting from a scion of his ancient house a felon's doom. The press had made the case known to the world; a reporter's quill had done this 'mischief;' and the British public, as one man, rose and sympathized with the poor old master, who was not to be 'bought out of the way;' for the insult which he received at the Admiralty, when he last sought an interview, rankled in his breast.

"Captain Ketchcalfe was convicted and sentenced to be transported for fourteen years, and in 'due course' was landed in the colony of New South Wales. His career in Botany Bay, if transcribed with minute fidelity, would warrant, perhaps, the assumption that it was the most extravagant fiction ever penned. There was scarcely a crime of which he was not guilty in Australia, and of which he was not convicted. Petty theft, burglary, forgery (he once forged the name of Sir James Dowling, one of the judges, and was transported to Norfolk Island for life), and piracy—piracy on the high seas, and the most extraordinary case that ever was heard of in this world. When he was on his way to Norfolk Island, in a chartered brig called the 'Wellington,' under sentence of transportation for life, for forging the signature of Sir James Dowling, he, one dark night, in a fearful gale of wind, contrived, having muffled his irons (his naval experience never deserted him), to get upon the deck, and unobserved entered the doctor's cabin, whence he abstracted from the medicine-chest a quantity of

arsenic, which he threw into the large copper vessel in which was made the soup for the ship's company, the convicts, fifty in number, and the guard, consisting of twenty-five men of the regiment of foot then quartered in the colony of New South Wales. On the following day, shortly after dinner-time (1 P.M.) nearly every soul on board the 'Wellington' was seized with pains so violent that they became perfectly helpless; whereupon Captain Ketchcalfe, and nine men—who, at his bidding, abstained from tasting the soup—in the most quiet and deliberate manner imaginable took possession of the vessel. The guard were thrown overboard alive, but most probably dying. The master, officers, and seamen belonging to the vessel shared the same fate. And then the remaining forty convicts were brought up in their irons, and with equal remorselessness were committed to the deep. In absolute command of the brig, Captain Ketchcalfe—than whom no one knew better how to work and navigate a vessel—resolved upon steering for North America, *via* Cape Horn; but inasmuch as there was not sufficient water on board for so long a passage, he bore up for Cloudy Bay, New Zealand, in order to fill up his casks. But previous to entering Cloudy Bay, in which were always to be found two or more whaling-ships, he employed himself and his convict crew in disfiguring the 'Wellington.' He chopped off her 'figure-head'—that of the Great Duke—and in lieu thereof, put up a piece of wood resembling a huge fish. He painted out the name of the vessel from the stern, and painted in the words—'Shark, of Boston.' He painted out her (sham) port-holes, and gave her a broad streak of red. He made with his own hands an American flag, and enjoined all on board to speak with a Yankee accent, of which he was himself a perfect master.

"When the 'Wellington,' now the 'Shark,' dropped her anchor in Cloudy Bay, there happened to be lying there a vessel called the 'Harriet,' and belonging to the merchant who had chartered the 'Wellington' to the Government.

The ‘*Harriet*’ was commanded by a Mr. Dyke, who for three years had been chief mate of the ‘*Wellington*,’ and, much as she was disfigured, he recognized her.

“ Captain (let us give him the title) Captain Dyke had a boat lowered, and visited the new arrival. He was received very courteously by Captain Ketchcalfe; but, while walking round the decks of the brig, his suspicions were completely confirmed. And on that night Captain Dyke and several of his crew, followed by fifty New Zealanders, all armed, boarded the ‘*Wellington*,’ and recaptured her. Captain Ketchcalfe and his crew were conveyed to Sydney, where he became king’s evidence, avowing that the part he had taken in the capture of the vessel was by compulsion. The nine convicts were hanged one Monday morning on the same gallows in the jail at Sydney. Captain Ketchcalfe was of course pardoned, and further, instead of being re-shipped for Norfolk Island, he was suffered to remain in Sydney, where he was employed as a workman in the Government dockyard. Strange to say, Captain Nicholson, of the Royal Navy, who was at the time the superintendent of the dockyard, had been Ketchcalfe’s first-lieutenant in the ‘*Hecuba*!’

“ In the year 185—was committed in Sydney one of the most foul murders that the human ear ever heard of. The victim was Mary Warland—or ‘Peggy the washerwoman,’ as she was called. It was not till two days afterwards that the murder was discovered, and then only by an accident. A police-officer, passing the back part of the premises occupied by Peggy, observed some linen on the drying-ground, and fearful that it might be stolen, he went to apprise the poor woman of her indiscretion, as he deemed it. The back-door of the cottage was shut, but not bolted; and, on lifting the latch, he found himself in the kitchen. He was surprised to find no fire burning, as usual; no candle, by the light of which she used to iron until eleven or twelve o’clock at night. He called aloud several times,

‘Peggy, are you at home?’ Receiving no answer, he ignited a match with his own tinder-box, and lighted a tallow candle that stood upon the dresser. What was his horror to behold poor Peggy stretched upon the kitchen-floor, her head literally cleft in two! Beside her was the axe with which the blow had been struck, and a sharp knife, with which had been cut off the third finger of Peggy’s left hand. The murderer had been unable to get the wedding-ring over the joint, and therefore had recourse to this violent proceeding. It was for the sake of that wedding-ring that the murder was committed—for it was well known she was very poor—and none of her small stock of furniture and clothes was removed from the cottage—not even any of the linen belonging to other people. The sensation created by this murder in the town of Sydney may be easily imagined.

“Now, sir, on the morning of the day on which the murder was discovered, a man went into the shop of a Polish Jew, who had recently arrived in Sydney, and set up a pawnbroker’s shop in Hunter Street, and pawned a wedding-ring for four-and-sixpence. The money was paid across the counter, and the ring, wrapped up in paper, was deposited with other pledges of the same description. As soon as the particulars of the murder became known, the Polish Jew was tempted to look at the ring that had been pawned to him. With the aid of a magnifying-glass, he observed upon it stains of blood. The ring had been wiped, but not washed. He (the Jew) went at once to the police-office, and had an interview with the chief-constable of Sydney; and, when asked to ‘describe the man,’ he took a piece of charcoal, and on the white-washed wall of the room in which the interview was held (having an immense talent for taking rough likenesses), drew not only the full face and side face, but a three-quarter face; and then gave a sketch of the man’s figure, dressed as he was in a pair of canvas trousers, canvas smock-frock with turned-down

collar, black Scotch cap, and high-low shoes. The likeness to Ketchcalfe was so perfect, that as soon as seen, he was recognized, and apprehended in the dockyard. And now, sir, to be brief—for it is getting late—Ketchcalfe was tried, convicted, and sentenced to suffer death. And he *was* hanged (it was that ring that hanged him) in the presence of the largest concourse of people that ever was seen in those days in the colony of New South Wales."

VI.

BARRINGTON.

A FEW years ago I made the acquaintance of an elderly lady, whose husband, so far back as 1799, held an official position, both civil and military, in the colony of New South Wales. Many anecdotes she told me of celebrated characters who had, in the words of one of them, "left their country for their country's good." With most, if not with all, of these celebrities the old lady had come in contact personally.

"One morning," she began, "I was sitting in my drawing-room with my two little children, who are now middle-aged men with large families, when a gentleman was announced. I gave the order for his admission; and on his entering the door of the apartment, I rose from my chair, and greeted him with a bow, which he returned in the most graceful and courtly manner imaginable. His dress was that of a man of fashion, and his bearing that of a person who had moved in the highest circles of society. A vessel had arrived from England a few days previously with passengers, and I fancied that this gentleman was one of them. I asked him to be seated. He took a chair, opposite to me, and at once entered into conversation, making the first topic the extreme warmth of the day, and the second the healthful appearance of my charming children—as he was pleased to speak of them. Apart from a mother liking to hear her

children praised, there was such a refinement in the stranger's manner, such a seeming sincerity in all he said, added to such a marvellous neatness of expression, that I could not help thinking he would form a very valuable acquisition to our list of acquaintances, provided he intended remaining in Sydney, instead of settling in the interior of the colony.

"I expressed my regret that the major (my husband) was from home; but I mentioned that I expected him at one o'clock, at which hour we took luncheon; and I further expressed a hope that our visitor would remain and partake of the meal. With a very pretty smile (which I afterwards discovered had more meaning in it than I was at the time aware of), he feared he could not have the pleasure of partaking of the hospitalities of my table, but, with my permission, he would wait till the appointed hour, which was then near at hand. Our conversation was resumed; and presently he asked my little ones to go to him. They obeyed at once, albeit they were rather shy children. This satisfied me that the stranger was a man of a kind and gentle disposition. He took the children, seated them on his knees, and began to tell them a fairy story (evidently of his own invention, and extemporized), to which they listened with profound attention. Indeed, I could not help being interested in the story, so fanciful were the ideas, and so poetical the language in which they were expressed.

"The story ended, the stranger replaced the children on the carpet, and approached the table on which stood, in a porcelain vase, a bouquet of flowers. These he admired, and began a discourse of floriculture. I listened with intense earnestness; so profound were all his observations. We were standing at the table for at least eight or ten minutes; my boys hanging on to the skirt of my dress, and every now and then compelling me to beg of them to be silent.

"One o'clock came, but not the major. I received, however, a note from him, written in pencil on a slip of paper.

He would be detained at Government House until half-past two.

“ Again I requested the fascinating stranger to partake of luncheon, which was now on table in the next room; and again, with the same winning smile, he declined. As he was about, as I thought, to depart, I extended my hand; but, to my astonishment, he stepped back, made a low bow, and declined taking it.

“ For a gentleman to have his hand refused when he extends it to another is embarrassing enough. But for a lady! Who can possibly describe what were my feelings? Had he been the heir to the British throne, visiting that penal settlement in disguise (and from the stranger’s manners and conversation he might have been that illustrious personage), he could scarcely have, under the circumstances, treated me in such an extraordinary manner. I scarcely knew what to think. Observing, as the stranger must have done, the blood rush to my cheeks, and being cognizant evidently of what was passing through my mind, he spoke as follows:—

“ ‘ Madam, I am afraid you will never forgive me the liberty I have taken already. But the truth is, the passion suddenly stole over me, and I could not resist the temptation of satisfying myself that the skill which made me so conspicuous in the mother-country still remained to me in this convict land.’ ”

“ I stared at him, but did not speak.

“ ‘ Madam,’ he continued, ‘ the penalty of sitting at table with you, or taking the hand you paid me the compliment to proffer me—youself in ignorance of the fact I am about to disclose—would have been the forfeiture of my ticket-of-leave, a hundred lashes, and employment on the roads in irons. As it is, I dread the major’s wrath; but I cherish a hope that you will endeavour to appease it, if your advocacy be only a return for the brief amusement I afforded your beautiful children.’ ”

“‘ You are a convict !’ I said, indignantly, my hand on the bell-rope.

“‘ Madam,’ he said, with an expression of countenance which moved me to pity, in spite of my indignation, ‘ hear me for one moment.’

“‘ A convicted felon, how dared you enter my drawing-room as a visitor ?’ I asked him, my anger again getting the better of all my other feelings.

“‘ The major, madam,’ said the stranger, ‘ requested me to be at his house at the hour when I presented myself; and he bade me wait if he were from home when I called. The major wishes to know who was the person who received from me a diamond necklace which belonged to the Marchioness of Dorrington, and came into my possession at a state ball some four or five years ago—a state ball at which I had the honour of being present. Now, madam, when the orderly who opened the front door informed me that the major was not at home, but that you were, that indomitable impudence which so often carried me into the drawing-rooms of the aristocracy of our country, took possession of me ; and, warmed as I was with generous wine—just sufficiently to give me courage—I determined to tread once more on a lady’s carpet, and enter into conversation with her. That much I felt the major would forgive me ; and, therefore, I requested the orderly to announce a gentleman. Indeed, madam, I shall make the forgiveness of the liberties I have taken in this room the condition of my giving that information which shall restore to the Marchioness of Dorrington the gem of which I deprived her—a gem which is still unpledged, and in the possession of one who will restore it on an application, accompanied by a letter in my handwriting.’

“ Again I kept silence.

“‘ Madam !’ he exclaimed, somewhat impassionedly, and rather proudly, ‘ I am no other man than Barrington, the illustrious pickpocket ; and this is the hand which in its

day has gently plucked, from ladies of rank and wealth, jewels which realized, in all, upwards of thirty-five thousand pounds, irrespective of those which were in my possession, under lock and key, when fortune turned her back upon me.'

" 'Barrington, the pickpocket!' Having heard so much of this man and of his exploits (although, of course, I had never seen him), I could not help regarding him with curiosity; so much so, that I could scarcely be angry with him any longer.

" 'Madam,' he continued, 'I have told you that I longed to satisfy myself whether that skill which rendered me so illustrious in Europe still remained to me, in this country, after five years of desuetude? I can conscientiously say that I am just as perfect in the art; that the touch is just as soft, and the nerve as steady as when I sat in the dress-circle at Drury Lane or Covent Garden.'

" 'I do not comprehend you, Mr. Barrington,' I replied. (I could not help saying *Mister*)

" 'But you will, madam, in one moment. Where are your keys?'

" I felt my pocket, in which I fancied they were, and discovered that they were gone.

" 'And your thimble and pencil-case, and your smelling-salts? They are here!' (He drew them from his coat-pocket.)

" My anger was again aroused. It was indeed, I thought, a frightful liberty for a convict to practise his skill upon me, and put his hand into the pocket of my dress. But, before I could request him to leave the room and the house, he spoke again; and, as soon as I heard his voice and looked in his face, I was mollified, and against my will, as it were, obliged to listen to him.

" 'Ah, madam,' he sighed, 'such is the change that often comes over the affairs of men! There was a time when ladies boasted of having been robbed by Barrington.'

Many whom I had never robbed gave it out that I had done so, simply that they might be talked about. Alas! such is the weakness of poor human nature that some people care not by what means they associate their names with the name of any celebrity. I was in power then, not in bondage. ‘Barrington has my diamond ear-rings!’ once exclaimed the old Countess of Kettlebank, clasping her hands. Her ladyship’s statement was not true. Her diamonds were paste, and she knew it, and I caused them to be returned to her. Had you not a pair of very small pearl-drops in your ears this morning, madam?’ ”

“I placed my hands to my ears, and discovered that the drops were gone. Again my anger returned, and I said, ‘How dared you, sir, place your fingers on my face?’ ”

“‘Upon my sacred word and honour, madam,’ he replied, placing his hand over his left breast, and bowing. ‘I did nothing of the kind! The ear is the most sensitive part of the human body to the touch of another person. Had I touched your ear my hope of having these drops in my waistcoat-pocket would have been gone. It was the springs only that I touched, and the drops fell into the palm of my left-hand.’ He placed the ear-rings on the table, and made me another very low bow.

“‘And when did you deprive me of them?’ I asked him.

“‘When I was discoursing on floriculture, you had occasion several times to incline your head towards your charming children, and gently reprove them for interrupting me. It was on one of those occasions that the deed was quickly done. The dear children were the unconscious confederates in my crime—if crime you still consider it—since I have told you, and I spoke the truth; that it was not for the sake of gain, but simply to satisfy a passionate curiosity. It was as delicate and as difficult an operation as any I ever performed in the whole course of my professional career.’ ”

"There was a peculiar quaintness of humour and of action thrown into this speech; I could not refrain from laughing. But, to my great satisfaction, the illustrious pickpocket did not join in the laugh. He regarded me with a look of extreme humility, and maintained a respectful silence, which was shortly broken by a loud knocking at the outer door. It was the major, who, suddenly remembering his appointment with Barrington, had contrived to make his escape from Government House, in order to keep it. The major seemed rather surprised to find Barrington in my drawing-room; but he was in such a hurry, and so anxious, that he said nothing on the subject.

"I withdrew to the passage, whence I could overhear all that took place.

"'Now, look here, Barrington,' said my husband, impetuously, 'I will have no more nonsense. As for a free pardon, or even a conditional pardon, at present, it is out of the question. In getting you a ticket-of-leave, I have done all that I possibly can; and as I am a living man, I give you fair warning that if you do not keep faith with me, I will *undo* what I have already done. A free pardon! What! Let you loose upon the society of England again? The Colonial Secretary would scout the idea, and severely censure the Governor for recommending such a thing. You know, as well as I do, that if you returned to England tomorrow, and had an income of five thousand a-year, you would never be able to keep those fingers of yours quiet.'

"'Well, I think you are right, major,' said the illustrious personage.

"'Then you will write that letter at once?'

"'I will. But on one condition.'

"'Another condition?'

"'Yes.'

"'Well, what is that condition? You have so many conditions that I begin to think the necklace will not be forthcoming after all. And, if it be not, by—'

“ ‘Do not excite yourself to anger, major. I give you my honour—’

“ ‘Your honour! Nonsense! What I want is, the jewel restored to its owner.’

“ ‘And it shall be, on condition that you will not be offended, grievously offended, with me for what I have done this day!’

“ ‘What is that?’

“ ‘Summon your good lady, and let her bear witness both for and against me.’

“ ‘My husband opened the drawing-room door, and called out, ‘Bessie!’

“ As soon as I had made my appearance, Barrington stated the case—all that had transpired—with minute accuracy; nay, more, he acted the entire scene in such a way that it became a little comedy in itself; the characters being himself, myself, and the children, all of which characters he represented with such humour that my husband and myself were several times in fits of laughter. Barrington, however, did not even smile. He affected to regard the little drama (and this made it the more amusing) as a very serious business.

“ This play over, my husband again put to Barrington the question, ‘Will you write that letter at once?’

“ ‘Yes,’ he replied, ‘I will; for I see that I am forgiven the liberty I was tempted to take.’ And seating himself at the table he wrote:—

“ ‘MR. BARRINGTON presents his compliments to MR. —, and requests that a sealed packet, marked DN. No. 27, be immediately delivered to the bearer of this note. In the event of this request not being complied with, Mr. Barrington will have an opportunity ere long of explaining to MR. —, in Sydney, New South Wales, that he (Mr. —) has been guilty of an act of egregious folly.’

“ Fourteen months passed away, when, one morning, my husband received a letter from a gentleman in the Colonial Office. He clapped his hands, cried ‘Bravo!’ and then read as follows:—

" 'MY DEAR MAJOR,—The great pickpocket has been as good as his word. My lady is again in possession of her brilliants. Do whatever you can for Barrington *in the Colony*; but keep a sharp eye upon him, lest he should come back and once more get hold of that necklace.'

" My husband sent for Barrington to inform him of the result of his letter, and he took an opportunity of asking the illustrious man if there were any other valuables which he would like to restore to the original owners.

" 'Thank you—no!' was the reply. 'There are, it is true, sundry little articles in safe custody at home; but, as it is impossible to say what may be in the future, they had better for the present stand in my own name.'"

VII.

THREE CELEBRITIES.

"Fox, Pitt, and Burke were," said my informant (an old lady who had been the wife of a Government official in New South Wales), "low London thieves, who were transported under the names of the three most celebrated orators and statesmen of their time. Their offence was picking pockets at a fair, and their sentences fourteen years. Charles James Fox was assigned to my husband, and we employed him in household duties. He was a slight young man of about twenty-four years of age, and far from ill-looking, when he first came into our service. For a few months he conducted himself remarkably well; but subsequently he became idle, negligent, and addicted to speaking the most flagrant untruths; so much so, that the major on several occasions had him flogged. On the last occasion he never returned to us. He watched his opportunity, and made his escape from the constable who had him in charge. He was, of course, gazetted as a runaway, and a reward of ten pounds offered for his apprehension. A few days afterwards the Gazette contained the names of William Pitt and Edmund Burke. They, too (most probably at the

instigation of Charles James Fox), had run away from their respective masters. It was rather droll to see those three great names placarded in all directions, and the persons who then bore them in the colony minutely described. Pitt's master was a Doctor Wylde, whom we knew very intimately. He described Pitt to us as a short, thick-set, and rather determined character. Edmund Burke, having been originally a compositor, was employed in the Government printing-office, which was then superintended by Mr. George Howe, who was afterwards permitted to publish a newspaper in Sydney, subject to the censorship of the Colonial Secretary. Burke, according to Mr. Howe's account, was a man of good natural ability, but of violent and, when excited, ferocious disposition.

"The career of these men, who took to the bush (considering that it extended over a period of eight years), was a very remarkable one. There was not a road in the colony, not even a cross-road or bush-road, upon which they had not stopped and robbed travellers. And it is a mistake to suppose that the police was an inefficient body in those days. It was more efficient than they are likely to be again. Some of the police had been highwaymen, poachers, gamekeepers; men who had been pardoned for capturing bushrangers guilty of great crimes, and who had received their appointments in consequence of the proofs they had given that confidence might be placed in them. Their pay was small, and the rewards for the apprehension of desperate characters were large. The pay of the great George Lewis, the most renowned of all Australian thief-takers and bushrangers, was only four dollars (one pound currency) per week, and as he kept two horses, and maize was commonly two dollars a bushel, you may readily imagine that he had to look to the walls, and not to his pay, for a livelihood."

"What do you mean by looking to the walls, my dear madam?" I said.

"All runaway convicts and bushrangers," she replied, "were placarded on the walls and gate-posts, as well as advertised in the Government Gazette. I have seen the walls of the police-office in Sydney literally covered with these handbills, headed 10*l.* Reward! 25*l.* Reward! 50*l.* Reward! 100*l.* Reward! The great thief-takers, men of George Lewis's stamp—and they were all men of prowess, courage, and sagacity—never hunted in couples. They always went forth alone. They were not only too greedy for the gain, but too jealous of each other to admit of their combining to effect the capture. They depended upon strategy and individual valour, rather than upon numbers, to accomplish the ends they had in view. It was a curious sight to see a group of these thief-takers (bloodhounds they were called) coolly spelling a fresh placard on the walls of the police-office, and then observe the speculation which was stamped upon their various countenances. My husband, of course, knew all these men, and so did I, for that matter; and when Charles James Fox became such a very distinguished man in his way, all of them, not in a body, but separately, came to make certain inquiries touching his habits and peculiarities. The major was from home when Mr. George Lewis called, and I received him in the breakfast parlour, and answered all the questions he put to me, 'Did Charles James Fox drink? Could he read and write? Was he a talkative or a silent sort of a man?' I answered that Charles James Fox did *not* drink; he could *not* read or write, and that he *was* a silent sort of a person. 'Burke can read,' said Mr. Lewis, 'but he is not much of a hand at writing; and as for Billy Pitt, he doesn't know a pothook from a hanger.' He then went on to say that he had had great hopes of taking, or bringing in dead, two out of the three lately, but that such hopes had been blighted; that he had hired a horse and cart, and had gone up the Paramatta Road, dressed as a farmer, in an old white top-coat, leather leggings, and a round hat; that, on

the first occasion, he went and returned unmolested ; but that, on the second occasion, he was stopped by two men armed with fowling-pieces, near the Iron Cove Creek, Ashfield ; that they demanded his money or his life ; that he said they should have it ; that dropping the reins, and putting his hands into the hind pockets of the old top-coat, he discharged, through the pockets, a brace of loaded pistols, within a yard of each man's breast, and brought them both down as dead as hammers ; that, what with the five pounds ten shillings ready money that he paid for the top-coat, the hire of the horse and cart at one pound a day, the bother and trouble of bringing the corpses to Sydney, and the loss of time, the job did not pay him, for they had only been at large three weeks, and the reward for them was a paltry ten pounds a head ; that he felt quite sure at the time that they were two of the three he was angling after ; and that he never felt so disgusted in the whole course of his life as when he had them looked at, at Hyde Park Barracks, and found out his mistake. Mr. Lewis spoke so very feelingly on the subject, that, horrible as was the theme, I could not help pitying him, albeit I was constrained to smile—especially when he remarked, quietly and seriously, ‘It was a thousand pities that I shot them, mum ; for in six or seven months from this time they would have been really worth having.’

“One beautiful afternoon, in the month of October, I was on my way to the factory at Paramatta to select a female (convict) servant. I had a friend, a Mrs. Stellman, with me in the phaeton ; and on the box was a groom as well as the coachman. My friend and myself were chatting away very cozily, and were approaching Homebush—an estate some ten or twelve miles from Sydney—when three voices called out ‘Stop ;’ and presently from the thick brushwood that skirted the road there emerged three men, one of whom I immediately recognized as our late servant, Charles James Fox, who, at the same moment, recognized

my features. The three men were all armed, and Pitt and Burke had their fowling-pieces levelled at the men on the box. At first Fox was startled, and I fancied I saw the man blush; but, speedily recovering himself, he hoped I was quite well, and that the major and the children also had their health. Had I been alone, I should certainly have read Mr. Fox a lecture, and have advised him to throw down his gun, and to give himself up to me. But as Mrs. Stellman was a good deal alarmed, I deemed it prudent to get away from the trio as quickly as possible. Touching his straw hat in the most respectful manner imaginable, Mr. Fox said, ‘I didn’t know this turn-out, mum. It is new since I left, or I should never have thought of stopping you, mum. Be so good, mum, as to assure the major that he has nothing to fear from me and my companions here.’ This speech was very pleasing to my ears; and with a slight inclination of my head towards Mr. Fox, I ordered the coachman to proceed. Fox had then been a bushranger for upwards of twelve months. As soon as I arrived at Paramatta, I reported to Mr. Kherwin, the chief constable, all that had taken place, and he at once took horse, accompanied by several of his myrmidons, and went in pursuit of Fox, Pitt, and Burke. But to no purpose. They had such secure hiding-places in the various localities they frequented, that they baffled every effort to discover them. And they were so cunning in their movements, that even the aborigines—the blacks—could not track them down. These strangely-gifted people—so far as sight is concerned—discovered several of their dens; but the birds had always flown. After a while, by the way, the blacks declined to track bushrangers; and if pressed to do so, would put the police on the wrong scent. The tribes in the vicinity of Sydney, Paramatta, and the other infant towns, had been intimidated, and several of their numbers shot by those lawless men.

“As you appeared to take some interest in my friend,

Mr. Barrington, I may mention that I met that illustrious personage on that afternoon at the factory in Paramatta, where he then held the situation of under-superintendent of convicts. He seemed very much amused when I recounted my adventure on the road, and observed, with his wonted humour and quaintness, ‘Well, madam, it was an act of gallantry and of generosity—considering how often the major had caused him to be flogged—which could scarcely have been expected at the hands of a plebeian thief—a contemptible London pickpocket.’ Mr. Barrington did not even smile when he said this; but assumed an air of extreme seriousness—emphasizing the words plebeian and contemptible with marvellous dexterity, so as to convey to me that he did not, at that moment, intend to allude to the eminent and aristocratic position which he had formerly held in his profession. Unintentionally, I wounded his feelings; or else his look was a consummate piece of acting, when, in answer to the question I put to him, ‘Why do you not consult your ingenuity, and capture these three men?’ he replied, ‘Ah! madam, in my leisure hours I pursue literature, not bushrangers. I am, at this present time, writing a play—a comedy in five acts, and founded on an incident in my own life.’

“I could not help saying, ‘I beg your pardon, Mr. Barrington,’ and then expressed a hope that I should have an opportunity of seeing his piece performed.

“‘It is for the London boards,’ he replied; ‘but I shall be proud to submit it to your judgment, previously to transmitting it to the committee at Drury Lane.’”

“Did he keep his promise?” I inquired.

“Yes,” said the old lady, “and a clever play it was. In some scenes it was very pathetic, in others comical in the extreme. There was not, however, a single coarse word in it, nor an allusion that could offend the most fastidious prude in Christendom. The title of the piece was, ‘All the World’s a Swindle.’”

“And the plot?”

“Of that I have only an indistinct recollection, but the story is something of this kind. On the Doncaster race-course, the great pickpocket, as Mr. Shenstone, meets a nobleman in the betting-ring, and loses to him a hundred guineas, which he pays in gold. Mr. Shenstone’s manners and his dress are those of a gentleman, and his equipage that of a man of fashion and of fortune. The nobleman is charmed with Mr. Shenstone, and the next day, when he meets him on the course, he greets him with a polite bow, which is returned by one equally polite. They speak; they make another bet for another hundred guineas; Mr. Shenstone loses, and with very great good-humour, pays his money to the nobleman, partly in gold and partly in bank-notes. That evening he calls at the hotel where the nobleman is staying, with his wife and daughter, a very handsome girl of eighteen years of age, and represents that a man from whom he had won a bet—a farmer-looking person, but evidently a sharper—had paid him in forged bank-notes, and as he had parted with some of these notes before he was aware of the fraud that had been committed, he was anxious to discover into whose possession they had come, in order that he might receive them back, and give good notes or gold in return. The nobleman and Mr. Shenstone carefully examine the notes which the former received; but amongst them no forgeries are found; they are all genuine. This examination lasts for some time, and, during its continuance, the lady and her daughter enter the sitting-room. Mr. Shenstone rises from his chair, and is thereupon introduced to the ladies, who become as much fascinated by the polished manners and discourse of the stranger as my lord is himself. Mr. Shenstone is invited to stay tea, which is about to be served. He accepts. And thus (what the great pickpocket desires) an acquaintance is established—an acquaintance which is renewed in London, some weeks afterwards, at the theatre, much to the great pickpocket’s

advantage, for he contrives to despoil his friend's friends of jewels worth five times the amount he lost on the race-course. When informed of this, he observes, with great truth, 'That thief Barrington! Who else?' My lord gambles very deeply, falls into serious difficulties, secretly purloins his wife's diamond bracelets, has a paste set made to resemble them, and sells the real brilliants to a jeweller, who disposes of them to an old duchess, from whose person the great pickpocket steals them, and at once proceeds to the box of the lady, who is sitting decked out in her paste. He informs her that Barrington is in the house, and advises her to place her jewels in her pocket. She does so. He then abstracts the paste gems, places the real diamonds in their stead, revisits the old duchess, who, intent on the play, has not yet discovered her loss, and around her aged wrists clasps the mockeries! Partly love for the young girl, and partly respect for her mother, form the motives for this action."

"Was the piece ever played?"

"The captain of the vessel to whom Barrington had intrusted it lost it on the voyage to England. But let me continue my story of Fox, Pitt, and Burke. I was on another occasion doomed to see their faces. The major and myself were returning from the farm at George's River. We had been on a visit to old Baron Wald, and had driven out in the gig. It was a beautiful moonlight night, and when we neared a place called the Iron Bark Forest, some thirteen miles from Sydney, we were commanded to stop by three men, two of whom presented their fowling-pieces at us, whilst the third said—

"Now, then, what have you got?"

"Is that you, sir?" said my husband, who recognized the man's voice, for it was Fox who spoke.

"'God bless me, major!' was the response. 'I beg you many pardons.'

"'Rob him!' cried out one of the others. 'If he had been my master, and had flogged me, I'd shoot him!'

“‘No! no!’ said Fox. ‘It was agreed that old masters were to go free, and when we wanted to rob old Howe, the other day, being very badly off for money, you reminded me of our agreement, and I now wish you to be reminded of it.’

“The major parleyed with them for at least a quarter of an hour, and reproved them for shooting a constable a few weeks back. They replied, that the constable had insisted on capturing them, and that they had acted only in self-defence. Their capture, eventually, was curiously effected.

“During the fifth year they had been at large they suddenly disappeared from the roads. They had not been seen or heard of for so long that it was imagined they had either made their escape from the colony, by some extraordinary means, or that they had, like some other bushrangers whose remains were found, been lost in the bush, and perished of hunger. Such, however, was not the case. They had penetrated the interior to a distance of fifty miles from Sydney, and had located themselves at a place not very far distant from a lofty mountain called Razorback, in consequence of its peculiar shape. Here they established themselves, built a log-house, enclosed several acres of land, which they cropped, and made a rather extensive garden for the growth of vegetables. They also built stock-yards and out-buildings for the cattle and the horses of which they possessed themselves. The luxuries of convict life—such as tea, sugar, tobacco, spirits, &c.—they had, previous to their retirement from business, stored up in very large quantities. They had, moreover, taken with them to their farm three convict women, whom they had (nothing loth) carried away from the services, respectively, of the persons to whom they paid marauding visits.

“They had taken away with them, from the house of a settler whom they had plundered, a large black Newfoundland dog. Three years and seven months after the dog was stolen, he, one morning, to the astonishment of his master, returned, jumped about, and barked in an ecstasy

of delight. The master of the dog (a Mr. Sutter) was afraid that the bushrangers, Fox, Pitt, and Burke, were about to pay him a second visit; and, summoning his servants, and arming them, he lay in wait and in ambush for their approach, determined to take them under any circumstances, dead or alive. But the bushrangers came not. From an examination of the dog's neck, it was quite evident that he had been kept continually on the chain, and that he must have broken his collar, and made his escape. Mr. Sutter, who lived within five or six miles of Paramatta, on the branch road to Liverpool, mounted his horse, and had an interview with Mr. Kherwin, the chief constable.

"There could be no question that the dog had broken loose, and found his old master; but, then, by what road had he come back? There was then no regular road beyond Liverpool. Those who had settled further in the interior had only their own bush tracks, as they were called. If the dog, they thought, could be put upon this track by his master, no doubt he could be coaxed to show the way to the abode of the bushrangers. It suddenly occurred to Mr. Kherwin that the blacks, having no idea of the end in view, would have no scruples in pointing out the direction whence the dog had come, and tracking him for five or six miles. This was determined upon; and taking with him a strong force, well armed, Mr. Kherwin returned with Mr. Sutter to his farm, and early on the following morning the expedition set out. The blacks were not long in finding the foot-prints of the dog, at some distance from the house, and began to run down the track at the rate of three or four miles an hour. Mr. Sutter and the dog accompanied the expedition. At noon there was a halt for refreshment, and then the pursuit was continued till evening, when the camp was formed, fires lighted, and the arms piled in readiness for any attack—not that there was any danger of such a thing in that lonely and untravelled region of the new world. The dog, strange to say, appeared to be very

sulky, and showed no disposition to render the slightest assistance. On the following afternoon the blacks came upon the imprint of a man's boot. They now began to suspect the truth, but they had gone too far. It was now a matter of compulsion, and not of choice. Towards evening one of the blacks from a considerable eminence pointed to some smoke which was issuing from a valley in the distance—a valley which was completely shut in on three sides by small mountains, and bounded on the fourth side by a clear and broad stream of water. An enchanting nook, as Mr. Kherwin described it to me. After proceeding a few hundred yards in the direction of the smoke, the barking of dogs was audible, and the lowing of cattle; and, ere long, a house and out-buildings became visible. Mr. Kherwin and Mr. Sutter then deliberated as to whether they should descend and commence the attack at once; or whether they should defer the operation until after nightfall, when they would most probably have retired to rest; or whether the attack should be delayed until the following morning just before daybreak. It was resolved, eventually, that while the daylight remained they should creep down to the edge of the valley, and there conceal themselves until ten or eleven o'clock, when they would march upon the abode, surround it, and call to the inmates to come out and surrender.

"This resolution was acted upon; but the bushrangers' dogs had kept up such a loud and incessant barking during the advance of the invaders, that the trio had arisen from their beds, lighted a candle, armed themselves, and come outside the door. Fox, Pitt, and Burke could be seen by the light of the candle in the house; but they could not see their enemy, for the night was dark. Nothing could have been easier than for Mr. Kherwin and his party to have fired a volley and shot them as they stood; but the chief constable could not make up his mind to this, nor would Mr. Sutter have seconded such a proposal. At length Mr. Kherwin, when within only twenty yards of

them, called out, in a very loud voice, ‘We are twelve in number : lay down your arms this instant, or you are dead men. Our pieces are levelled at you.’ They threw down their arms, retired within the house, and barred the door. Fortunately for Mr. Kherwin’s party, they had no lantern or candle with them ; for, had they shown a light, some of the party would have fallen to a certainty. What was now to be done ?

“The besiegers approached the door of the house, and desired the bushrangers to come out ; but they returned no answer. To break in upon them was impossible, for there were no crowbars, pickaxes, or other such weapons at hand ; while the numerous dogs on the premises became so vehement and desperate, it was necessary to shoot and bayonet several of them. Matters remained thus until the morning, when the besiegers withdrew to a distance of about sixty yards from the house, and there took up a position in a stock-yard. The besieged, however, opened fire from loop-holes, and in less than a quarter of a minute twelve rounds of ball-cartridge were discharged from as many firelocks. Fortunately, none of the shots took effect. It was therefore deemed prudent to withdraw for the present to a distance of one hundred yards, and stand behind a clump of large gum-trees. Nevertheless, the besieged, whenever they saw a head or a hand, or a foot, had a shot at it. From the number of shots with which they were simultaneously greeted, Mr. Kherwin believed that there were at least nine bushrangers in the house ; and he was unprepared for an encounter of this character—each of his party having only twenty rounds of ammunition—he was compelled to reserve his fire. The house, thickly coated as it was with mud, was bullet-proof. Mr. Sutter, therefore, at Mr. Kherwin’s instigation, rode into Paramatta for reinforcements, taking with him several of the blacks as guides. The commandant at Paramatta sent a sergeant and ten private soldiers to Mr. Kherwin’s aid.

"It was not until the third day, however, that they arrived at the scene of action; for they had to take with them two light field-pieces, six-pounders, and a variety of implements for effecting an entrance in case the mud-casing to the house should resist the cannon-shot for any length of time. The news soon arrived in Sydney, and numbers of officers and gentlemen, many of whom had been robbed on the road by Fox, Pitt, and Burke, hastened to the spot.

"On the morning of the second day after the arrival of the military, one of the shots from a field-piece happened to strike the door of the stronghold, and shivered it to atoms; whereupon a woman, with her hair streaming down her back, and holding in her hand a large white rag at the end of a stick, came out of the house, and approaching the besiegers, cried out, 'We surrender!' The firing ceased, and the woman was permitted to return and communicate to the bushrangers that only ten minutes would be allowed them to come out, unarmed, and give themselves up. This they did, and were forthwith ironed and handcuffed.

"The women, it seems, had aided them in firing at the authorities, Fox, Pitt, and Burke having trained them to the use of fire-arms, and made them expert markswomen. In the house were found no less than thirty fowling-pieces, twelve pairs of pistols, powder and shot in large quantities, lead for casting bullets, and several swords and cutlasses. The abode itself had been cleanly kept. Everything was in the neatest order; while the land, considering that the bushrangers were but amateur agriculturists, was very well tilled. In the dairy were found both butter and cheese of their own making; in the store-house salted beef and pickled pork of their own curing. In short, there were very few farms in the colony better stocked. They had abundance of poultry and pigeons.

"Fox, Pitt, and Burke were hanged in the Paramatta jail. The women pleaded that they had been taken away by force; and as the plea was accepted, they were placed

in the factory. These were all under sentence of transportation for life; but a few years afterwards they obtained tickets of leave, became the wives of expirees, and led tolerably respectable lives.

“Several officers made applications to the Governor to have the bushrangers’ farm granted to them, and one of them had the good fortune to obtain it.”

VIII.

BARON WALD.

“WHAT led to the old gentleman’s misfortune,” said the old lady, who told me the story one afternoon, “that is to say, what crime he had committed, I am not quite sure; but I think my husband said the baron’s offence was following to England a countryman of his own, and shooting him in the streets of London, in order to avenge the wrong which the victim had inflicted on a member of his ancient family. As the offence was committed on British soil, he became amenable to British laws, which punish murder with death, except in those cases where the sovereign exercises his prerogative—as George the Third did in the case of the baron, who, immediately on his arrival, was provided with separate apartments in the prisoners’ barracks, and informed that he might employ his time as he pleased. There could be no question that the baron was a person of some importance in Germany; for I happen to know that special instructions were forwarded from home to the Colonial Government, and periodical reports required as to his state of health and the nature of his occupations. It was, in short, evident that, although the old baron had grossly violated our laws, and had paid, or was paying, the modified penalty thereof, he was still regarded by some of the loftiest in the mother-country as an object of sympathy and commiseration.

"My husband had a grant of land about seventeen or eighteen miles from Sydney. Through this land the river—called George's River—runs. There are several very pretty sites for houses; but there is one in particular, where the river bends itself very fantastically, and tall Australian oak-trees grow upon the very edge of the banks. The river is not very broad, not broader, perhaps, than the Thames at Eton.

"It was not my husband's intention to build on this property. He merely wanted it as a place where he might keep a few brood mares; and a few cows—just sufficient to supply us every week with butter. The land was fenced in, and a hut erected thereon; but nothing further was laid out upon this grant of three hundred and twenty acres, to which no name even had yet been given. It was usually alluded to as the George's River farm. You must know that, in those days, officers connected with the administration of affairs had farms in all directions. Many were grants, many were purchases. Land was of very little value then. This very place of which I am speaking was not worth more than sixty pounds. No one would have given fifty pounds for it. Why, four acres and a half in George Street, nearly opposite to the barrack gates, my husband sold to a man who had been a regimental tailor, for the following articles:—

Twelve dozens of port wine,
Six gallons of Hollands,
Two pieces of broadcloth,
Twenty-five pounds of American tobacco,
One chest of tea,
Two bags of sugar,
One set of harness for gig,
One saddle and bridle,
One single-barrelled fowling-piece,
Two canisters of powder, and
Four bags of shot.

"And a noble bargain it was considered by every one; though I have lived to see that same allotment sold in little

pieces, and realize upwards of fifty thousand pounds. Where the Post-Office now stands was the boundary of our paddock. But never mind these stupid statistics, which have really nothing to do with the old baron.

"One day the major was driving out in his gig to visit this George's River farm, and give some instructions to the servant in charge of it, when he overtook the baron, about four miles from Sydney, walking along the Paramatta Road. The major pulled up, and inquired the destination of the old gentleman.

"'I am going,' said he, 'to George's River, to see Colonel Johnstone, from whom I wish to ask a favour. I called at Annandale, and they told me that the colonel had ridden to the farm, and I am now in pursuit of him.'

"The baron had made himself a perfect master of the English language, though he spoke with a foreign accent.

"'Jump in, baron,' said the major; 'I, too, am going to George's River.'

"They had not driven far before they overtook the colonel. He was talking to an elderly man in the road—a man whom my husband recognized as one who had been a sergeant in the regiment when Colonel Johnstone marched it to Government House, deposed Governor Bligh, and placed himself at the head of affairs."

"Did you know Colonel Johnstone?" I asked.

"My husband," replied the old lady, "was a captain in the regiment; but, fortunately for him, he was not at the head of his company when it proceeded to enforce that strong measure. Colonel Johnstone was the godfather of my eldest boy. I can remember his giving an account of what took place on that memorable occasion of his deposing Governor Bligh. 'We could not find him for a long time,' said he, 'and at last discovered him under a bed. We had to pull him out by the legs, for he would not come out of his own accord, nor when I commanded him. The colonel was sentenced by the court-martial that was held upon him

in England to be shot. But his interest was too powerful to admit of the sentence being carried out, and he was suffered to return to and end his days in the colony.

"My husband, who knew the colonel's temperament so well, saw that he was in anything but a good humour; and, whispering to the baron to forego his request for the present, they bade the colonel 'Good-day!' and drove on at a rapid pace.

"The favour that I wished to ask Colonel Johnstone is this," said the baron, "to permit me to occupy a small piece of land on this farm of his; and in return I will take care that his fences shall not be destroyed, and his cattle stray away. I do not like the locality of Sydney. I care not for ocean scenery. I wish to be in a lonely place, and live on the banks of a pretty river."

"I have just such a place on this farm of mine which we are approaching," said the major; "and if you approve of it, we shall have no difficulty in agreeing about the terms, baron."

A few minutes afterwards the major and the baron were standing on the site I have already described to you. The latter was in ecstasies; and, clasping his hands, exclaimed, "Wie herrlich! wie friedlich!" (How charming! how peaceful!)

"The terms were very soon settled. The baron was to rent that piece of land in the centre of the grant, containing in all about ten acres, and henceforward to be known as Waldsthal, on a lease for twenty-one years, at one dollar per year, paid quarterly. Spanish dollars and cents were the currency in those days.

"There was an abundance of timber of all kinds, and available for building purposes, on the land; and the major could at all times command as much convict labour as he pleased, including artisans of every class. He drafted from the barracks, sawyers, carpenters, blacksmiths, plasterers, labourers, and subsequently painters and glaziers. These

men were sent to the farm, and placed at the disposal of the baron. They were previously informed that any disobedience or disrespect towards the baron would be visited by summary corporal punishment at Liverpool (then a little out-settlement three miles from the farm), and a transfer to an iron-gang. Inasmuch as the major, though far from being a cruel man or a hard master, invariably kept his word with the felonry of the colony, there was not the least occasion for him to repeat the admonition; and at the end of three months there was erected on Waldsthal one of the prettiest little weather-boarded cottages that the imagination can conceive. The baron was his own architect, and had combined comfort with good taste. There was his little dining-room, about thirteen feet by twelve; his little drawing-room, of the same dimensions; his little library; his store-room; and his cellar and larder; and his hall. The bedroom and dressing-room were the only large rooms in the cottage. The flower and kitchen gardens were also very prettily laid out, and proportioned exactly in size to that of the cottage. On the whole, it was a perfect gem of a cottage residence; and it was furnished with a neatness and a simplicity which were really touching.

"Now and then—say half a dozen times in the year—the major and myself used to visit the baron, and spend the day with him. Upon all occasions, while walking round the grounds with him, the old gentleman was to me very communicative. Amongst other things, he told me that he had never been married; but that he had a sister who was the mother of three sons and two daughters; that he had served in the army of his native country, and that the military decorations which were suspended over his fireplace in the drawing-room were the rewards for his services in various fields of battle. These little matters, together with his sword, he said, had been forwarded to him through the kindness and consideration of a distinguished military man of rank in the service of the King of England.

"Generally, we gave the baron notice of our intention to visit him ; but on several occasions, when we had suddenly made up our minds for the excursion, we omitted this little formality, and took our chance of finding him ready to receive us. It would not have been strange had a gentleman living, like the baron, in almost utter seclusion in the Bush, been negligent of his personal appearance. But it was not so. Go when we would—with notice or without notice—we found him invariably as cleanly in person, and as neat in his attire, as though he had been a resident of any capital in Europe, and in the habit of daily mixing in its society. One Saturday afternoon, when we invaded him unexpectedly, we found him in the farm-yard, superintending the feeding of his poultry ; but dressed, as usual, à la Frederick the Great, in Hessian boots, a brown velvet coat, elaborate frills and ruffles, a pigtail, and a three-cornered hat. His establishment consisted of two men servants (convicts assigned to the major) and an old woman who had been transported, but emancipated shortly after her arrival in the colony, for giving timely notice of an intended rise and general revolt amongst the convicts in Sydney and its vicinity. This old woman did the washing and the cooking, and kept the cottage in that very good order on which the baron doubtless insisted. He was not a witty man by any means ; but he had an inexhaustible stock of entertaining anecdotes, which he told remarkably well, and at the proper moment. He was, moreover, an excellent musician, and played upon the violin with the skill of a professor. Moreover, he took likenesses with a facility and faithfulness which were truly astonishing.

"A few years after he had first taken up his abode in the cottage, the baron was presented with a free pardon, which bore the autograph of his Majesty George the Third ; and he was informed that, if he desired to return to Germany, the Colonial Government were instructed to provide him a passage in any vessel in which he might think proper to

select a cabin. It was painful to witness, as I did, the emotion of the old baron, when the major communicated to him this piece of information. The king's pardon he was compelled to accept, and he did so in the most graceful manner; but he expressed a wish to remain at his 'little paradise' on the George's River farm so long as he lived, and on his death that he might be buried there.

"In all, the baron lived at Waldsthal for eleven years; and during that period had several visits from those pests called bushrangers. On the first occasion, they handcuffed the baron and the old woman together, and locked them up in the stables, whence they were unable to effect an escape. The men servants they tied separately to trees, and bound them so tightly that they could not extricate themselves. For upwards of forty hours they did not taste food or drink. When discovered, by the merest accident, they were all nearly famished. The culprits were captured several months afterwards, and were hanged in the jail at Sydney for a series of robberies on the highway. (The old baron, by the bye, declined to give evidence against them.) The major asked for the dead bodies, and they were given up to him. He caused them to be suspended in chains from the bough of a large tree on the Liverpool Road, and nearly opposite, though half a mile distant from, the old baron's cottage. This, however, did not operate as an example or terror to the desperate criminals with whom we had to deal, for the next party, four in number, who went to rob the baron, cut down the dead bodies; and, locking the baron and his household up in the same room with them, rifled the premises, and took their departure. These men were also captured and hanged. At the baron's request the major did not ask for their bodies. He (the baron) said they were very disagreeable people to come in contact with when living; but, if possible, worse when they had been dead some time.

"The major's turn came for doing duty at Norfolk Island

as commandant, and we went to that terrestrial paradise ; where the clanking of chains and the fall of the lash rang in the ear from daylight till dark—these sounds accompanied occasionally by the report of a discharged musket, and the shriek of some wretch who had fallen mortally wounded. These shots became so frequent that, at last, they ceased to disturb us, even at our meals. Our house was behind a rampart, surmounted by a battery of guns, loaded to the muzzles with bullets, bits of iron, tenpenny-nails, and tenter-hooks. By day and night sentries guarded the doors with loaded muskets and fixed bayonets. ‘Kill the commandant !’ was always the first article of the agreement these desperate monsters came to when they entertained an idea of escape. In the morning when they were brought out, heavily ironed, to go to work, the guard that had been on duty all night was drawn up opposite to them. The relieving guard then came from the barracks ; and, in the presence of the commandant, obeyed the order ‘Prime and load.’ Then came the ringing of the iron ramrod in the barrel. Then the order ‘Fix bayonets ;’ followed by the flashing of the bright steel in the sun’s rays. Many a time have I, from my window, seen these incorrigibles smile and grin during this ceremony, albeit they knew that, upon very slight provocation, they would receive the bullet or taste the steel.

“ During the twelve months that we were on the island, one hundred and nine were shot by the sentries in self-defence, and sixty-three bayoneted to death, while the average number of lashes administered every day was six hundred. Yet, to my certain knowledge, almost every officer who acted as commandant at Norfolk Island tried to be as lenient as possible, but soon discovered that, instead of making matters better, they made them worse, and they were, in consequence, compelled to resort, for security’s sake, to the ready use of the bullet and bayonet, and the constant use of the lash. That part of the punishment

which galled these wretched prisoners most was the perpetual silence that was insisted upon. They were not allowed to speak a word to each other. One day when the major was inspecting them, they addressed him through a spokesman, who had been originally a surgeon, and who had been transported for a most diabolical offence. He was a very plausible man, and made a most ingenious speech, which he finished thus :—

“ ‘ Double, if you will, the weight of our irons and our arm-chains, reduce the amount of the food we now receive by way of ration ; but, in the name of humanity, permit us the use of our tongues and our ears, that we may have at least the consolation of confessing to each other the justice of the punishment we have to undergo ! ’ ”

“ The major turned a deaf ear to this harangue, and when he related it to me laughed at it. I, however, very foolishly took a different view of the case, and teased him into trying the effect of such indulgence. What was the result ? The use they made of their tongues was to concoct a plan for butchering the garrison, and every free man, and seizing the next vessel that brought a fresh cargo of convicts to the island. There would have been a frightful encounter and awful bloodshed, and it is impossible to say which side would have gained the mastery. It was a Jew who betrayed his fellow-criminals, and gave my husband the information just in time ; for on the morning following the expected vessel hove in sight. The convicts, however, were all safely locked up, and had their bread and water handed in to them through the strong iron bars of the small windows of their cells. My husband called a council of war, and it was resolved that several of the ringleaders should be shot. For doing this, by the way, he received a severe reprimand from the Governor of New South Wales, who informed him that it was his duty to send them to Sydney to be tried and hanged. This, next to effecting an escape, would have been precisely what the culprits most

desired. The Jew who gave the information was sent to Sydney (his life would have been taken on the island); a ticket-of-leave was granted to him, and he became a street hawker. Subsequently, he was emancipated, and became an innkeeper and money-lender. Eventually, he obtained a free pardon, visited England, bought a ship and cargo, and became a merchant. He is now in possession of landed and other property of enormous worth. The first time I saw that man he was a manacled felon, working on Norfolk Island amongst his compeers in infamy. The last time I saw him he was lolling in a handsome carriage, dressed in what he conceived the acmé of fashion, and was drawn by two thoroughbred-horses.

"In talking of Norfolk Island I have lost sight of the dear old baron. While we were away, we received a letter from him, in which he stated that he had been visited for a third time by bushrangers, but that they had not robbed him, they had only been guilty of a mauvaise plaisanterie. They had merely made him and the old woman exchange garments, and dance for them while they drank some spirits and water, and smoked their short clay pipes. It was very humiliating to him, he remarked, but to them it was, no doubt, very funny.

"Eventually the old baron became very ill. Several military surgeons went to see him; but they all declared to my husband that his case was a hopeless one. And so it proved to be; for he lingered on until he died. Amongst his papers was found a will—a very short one—by which he bequeathed to my husband (whom he appointed his sole executor), all that he might die possessed of in the colony of New South Wales. His effects, as may be supposed, were not very valuable intrinsically; but we prized them very highly in remembrance of the old gentleman. He was buried at Waldsthal, and his tombstone is still there. The cottage was accidentally burnt down, and the place has since become a ruin."

IX.

SIR HENRY HAYES.

“SIR HENRY HAYES,” said the old lady, one day to me, “was what was called in Sydney ‘a Special.’ Specials were gentlemen by birth and education, who had been convicted of offences which, however heinous in a legal point of view, did not involve any particular degree of baseness. For instance, Major B., who, in a violent fit of passion, stabbed his footman for accidentally spilling some soup and soiling the king’s livery, which the major was then wearing—was a Special: so was the old German baron, whose history I gave you on another occasion: and so were those Irish gentlemen who took a prominent part in the rebellion, and escaped the fate that awaited Mr. Emmett—Specials. All those kinds of criminals, up to the departure of General Macquarrie, and the arrival of Sir Thomas Brisbane, were not treated like common thieves and receivers of stolen property, but with great consideration. If they were not emancipated immediately on their arrival, they were suffered to be at large without the formality of a ticket-of-leave. They were, in short, treated rather as prisoners of war on their parole than as prisoners of the Crown in a penal settlement. Grants of land were not given to them while they were in actual bondage, but they were permitted to locate themselves on any unoccupied piece of land in the vicinity of Sydney. The greater number of them were well supplied with funds by their relations in England, Ireland, or Scotland, and erected very comfortable, if not particularly handsome, abodes, and laid out gardens and grounds. General Macquarrie went a little too far, perhaps. He not only admitted them to his table as soon as they were emancipated, but he elevated some of them to the magisterial bench.

“Sir Henry built a very pretty little cottage on the estate

known as Vaucluse, and upon which the house of Mr. William Charles Wentworth now stands. There is not a lovelier site in the known world. Beautifully wooded with evergreens, the land covered with every description of heath, which is in bloom nearly all the year round ; a lovely bay of semicircular shape, and forming one of the inlets of the magnificent harbour of Port Jackson, spread out before the lawn, its dark-blue waters laving the milk-white sand, some black rocks in the distance (known as ‘the Bottle and Glass’), standing out sufficiently far to cause the spray to beat continually over them, the north shore plainly visible across the broad expanse of water,—travel where you will, the eye will not rest upon any spot more favoured by Nature than that exquisite valley which was called Vaucluse, in consequence of its resemblance in one or two respects to the Vallis Clausus, where Petrarch, in the words of Lord Byron,

“With his melodious tears gave himself to fame.”

To put his crime out of the question, Sir Henry was a man of very great taste, and an Irish gentleman of the old school.”

“What was his crime?” I asked, in my then ignorance of this colonial celebrity.

“He carried off by force and violence a young lady with whom he was passionately in love, and who had several times refused his offers of marriage. The penalty of the offence was transportation for life. I am not quite sure that he was not, in the first instance, sentenced to be hanged. My husband, in common with many officers, was partial to Hayes, who could be very witty and amusing, and who, whatever may have been his habits in early life, led a most temperate and exemplary life in the colony of New South Wales. He was surrounded by every comfort that money could purchase, and he was always glad to see persons of whom he was in the habit of speaking as ‘those of my own order.’ The only defect in his manner was, that his air was too patronizing.

“That Hayes was perfectly mad on the crime that led to

his banishment there could not be the slightest question ; but upon all other points no one could be more rational. That his statements with reference to his case were untrue, no one who read the report of his trial could doubt for a single moment ; but that Hayes himself believed his own version to be the correct one, was equally certain. I never saw Sir Henry but twice, and I must do him the justice to say, that on neither occasion did he speak of his case. He was by far too well bred to think of making the faintest allusion to it. By the way, he did once say in my presence, on the occasion of his killing a fly with the handle of a carving-fork, ‘That’s how I should like to crush John Philpot Curran,’ but upon my husband remarking to him, ‘My wife never heard of that person, Hayes,’ Sir Henry made me a very low bow, begged me a million pardons, and instantly changed the theme.”

“Why was he so inveterate with regard to Mr. Curran ?” I inquired.

“It was Mr. Curran, my husband told me, who prosecuted Sir Henry Hayes,” was the old lady’s reply. “I told you that I only saw Sir Henry twice,” she continued. “On the first occasion he called at our house, in a state of great nervous excitement. After being introduced to me, and speaking for a while on various subjects, he thus addressed my husband : ‘My dear major, for the last eleven days I have suffered agonies of mind, and have been praying, from early dawn to dusky night, almost without intermission, to my favourite saint, Saint Patrick. But he seems to take no more notice of me, nor of my prayers, than if I were some wretched thief in a road-gang, with manacles on my leg, and a stone-breaking hammer in my hand.’

“‘What is the matter, that you require the aid of Saint Patrick ?’ said my husband.

“‘The matter !’ replied Sir Henry. ‘You are aware, perhaps, that that part of the country where I live literally swarms with venomous serpents ; there are black snakes,

brown snakes, gray snakes, yellow snakes, diamond snakes, carpet snakes—in short, every species of snake in the known world. Now, so long as they confined themselves to the lawn and the garden, I did not so much mind. It was bad enough to have them there, but, with caution, I could avoid them. The brutes, however, have lately taken to invade the house. We have killed them in the verandah, and in every room, including the kitchen. Now, it was in consequence of this that I addressed my prayers to Saint Patrick, and suggested that he might whisper to them to go into other people's houses, and not mine, in order to gratify their curiosity concerning the habits of civilized man; but to no purpose. Last night I found a gentleman, six feet long, and as black as a coal, coiled up on my white counterpane; and another of the same dimensions underneath the bed. However, I am determined they shall not banish me from that abode, but that I will banish them; or, at all events, keep them at a proper distance—say a distance of at least fifty yards from any part of the house. And what I want you to do, my dear major, is to render me some assistance in the matter.'

"'What do you propose doing?' my husband inquired.

"'You know perfectly well, my excellent friend,' continued Sir Henry, 'that Saint Patrick so managed matters that no snake could ever live on or near Irish soil. The very smell of it is more than enough for them. It will be a matter of time and of money; but to carry out my project I am most firmly resolved.'

"'What do you propose doing? and how can I aid you?' said the major.

"'Hark ye!' returned Sir Henry. 'I intend to import to this country about five hundred tons of genuine Irish bog, which shall be dug from the estate of a friend of mine. It shall come out in large biscuit barrels. I shall then have a trench dug round my premises, six feet wide and two feet deep; and this trench the Irish earth shall fill.'

“‘And do you really believe that Australian snakes will be kept away by your Irish soil, Sir Henry?’ said the major.

“‘Believe! Of course, I do. I am quite certain of it,’ responded Hayes. ‘This very day I have written to my friend in Ireland, and told him to employ an agent to carry out my wishes, and have the bog-earth taken down to Cork for shipment. Now, the favour I have to ask of you is this: to write, in your official capacity, a letter to my agent, which I will enclose to him—such a letter as will lead the captains and doctors of the ships that touch at Cork, to fill up the complement of convicts for these shores, to suppose that the soil is for Government, and required for botanical purposes; and further, I want you to allow it to be consigned to yourself or the Colonial Secretary. Each ship might remove a quantity of its stone ballast and put the casks of bog in its stead. By these means I should get it all the quicker.’

“My husband endeavoured to laugh Sir Henry out of his idea; but in vain. He was firm, and said:—

“‘If you won’t assist me, I must instruct them to charter a ship for the especial purpose, and that would cost a very serious sum of money.’

“My husband, of course, could not think of acting in the matter without previously obtaining the consent of the Governor, who was so amused at the superstitious character of Hayes’s enterprise, that his excellency caused the required letter to be written, and handed to him.

“About a year afterwards, the first instalment of the soil arrived—some forty barrels—and was conveyed from Sydney to Vaucluse (a distance of six miles) by water; and within the next year the entire quantity had reached its destination. The trench, in the mean time, had been dug, and all was now ready for ‘circumventing,’ as Sir Henry expressed it, ‘the premises and the vipers at one blow.’

“My husband and myself and a large party of ladies and gentlemen went down to Vaucluse in the Government

barges to witness the operation of filling in the trench. The superintendent of convicts—a countryman of Hayes', and who believed as implicitly as Hayes himself did in the virtue of Irish soil with regard to vipers—lent Sir Henry barrows and shovels and a gang consisting of seventy-five men—all of them Irishmen—in order to complete the work as rapidly as possible. Sir Henry, in person, superintended, and was alternately pathetic and jocular. Some of his running commentaries on Saint Patrick and his wonderful powers, and some snatches of song that he sang in honour of the saint, convulsed with laughter all who those stood around him. The work over, one or two of the men asked for a small quantity of the sacred earth, and Sir Henry said—

“Well, take it and welcome; but I would rather have given you its weight in gold.”

“Strange to say, from that time forward, Sir Henry Hayes was not visited by snakes. They did not vacate the grounds in the vicinity of Vaucluse, but none were ever seen within the magic circle formed of the Irish earth. Whether the charm is worn out, and whether the Wentworths are invaded as was Sir Henry, I know not. But this I know, that Captain Piper, who held the appointment of naval officer in the colony, to whom Vaucluse was subsequently granted, and from whom Mr. Wentworth purchased it, assured me that, during the many years he lived there with his family, no venomous reptile had ever been killed or observed within Hayes's enclosures, notwithstanding they were plentiful enough beyond it.”

I wish the reader to understand that I have simply related the above story as it was told to me, and that I do not offer any opinion as to the efficacy or otherwise of Irish soil in keeping away Australian snakes from any spot upon which it may be placed.

After a pause, the old lady resumed:—

“I ought to have mentioned that it was on the seventeenth

of March, Saint Patrick's Day, that this curious ceremony was performed, and that at its conclusion, at half-past four in the afternoon, we dined with Sir Henry in a large tent formed of the old sails of a ship, which were lent to him for the occasion by the captain of the vessel then lying in the harbour. Sir Henry was in excellent spirits, and, when the evening closed in, he sang several Irish melodies with great sweetness and pathos. To every one present he made himself extremely agreeable, and, on the whole, I never spent a happier day in my life, albeit I was the guest of a Special convict."

X.

KATE CRAWFORD.

"We had several female Specials," said the old lady; "but the most remarkable of them was Kate Crawford, Beautiful Kitty, as she used to be called. She was very handsome, certainly, and not more than nineteen when she arrived in the colony."

"What had been her condition in life?" I asked.

"She was the daughter of a Yorkshire squire. In short, she was a lady by birth," was the reply, "and had received the education of persons in her father's position and circumstances, and she was accomplished, according to the standard of that day."

"And what was her crime?"

"Horse-stealing."

"Horse-stealing!"

"Yes. That was the offence of which she was convicted, and, in those barbaric days, sentenced to be hanged. That sentence, however, was commuted to transportation for fourteen years."

"Rather a strange offence for a young lady to commit," I remarked.

"Very true; but you must hear the particulars, just as she related them to me, and to several other ladies who took a very great interest in her. And remember, that all she told us—I mean all the facts she stated—corresponded exactly with those detailed in the report of her trial, which was subsequently, at her request, obtained from England. In one sense of the word, Kate was a very bold girl; in another sense, she was the very reverse of bold. Her manners were in perfect harmony with her person—soft, gentle, and feminine; but, if she were resolved upon carrying out any project, great indeed must have been the obstacle she would not surmount. Her story, as she told it, was this:—

"My father, Squire Crawford, and one Squire Pack, lived within a mile of each other. Their estates adjoined. Squire Pack had a son, John Pack, of about twenty-four years of age. I was then between seventeen and eighteen. John Pack was an only son, and I was an only daughter. Both Squire Pack and my father were widowers, and had housekeepers. The old people, over their bowls of punch one night, settled that John Pack should be my husband. Now, it so happened that John Pack—whom I liked very much, he was such a good-natured goosey—was already in love, and secretly engaged to a farmer's daughter, a stout, tall, red-haired girl, with blue eyes, and a very florid, but clear, complexion. Just the girl, in short, to captivate poor John, whose taste was not particularly refined. She had, besides, the exact amount of learning to suit poor John, who was not an erudite person by any means. I, too, had a secret engagement with a younger son of Sir Francis Bowman, and who was a lieutenant in a regiment of foot. Squire Pack and my father were both great tyrants, and to have offered the slightest opposition to their plans would possibly have led to their putting into execution, respectively, that threat which was constantly on the lips of either of them: I'll turn you out of doors,

and cut you off with a shilling ! John Pack and I, therefore, came to an understanding. We were to be lovers in the presence of the old people ; but to every other intent and purpose, we were to assist each other in corresponding with our true loves—trusting, as we did, to some accident or some quarrel between our fathers to annul the marriage contract they had entered into on our behalf. Matters went on this way for several months, and nothing could be more satisfactory to us young people. John Pack frequently carried letters and messages for me, and I as frequently did the same for him. Squire Pack and my father used to quarrel once in every year, and for a month or two were the most implacable enemies ; but, at the end of such term, the one or the other would give way, make an advance (which was always met), shake hands, and become as good friends as ever. The truth was, that when the evenings drew in, they missed their game of cribbage ; for John Pack was a very sleepy person over cards, and, as for myself, I could never play at any game except beggar-my-neighbour.

“ ‘ One morning in the month of December the hounds met a few miles from our house. Squire Pack and my father rode to cover together. John Pack, who had brought me a letter from my lover, accompanied them, and joined the meet. The moment they were out of the gate, I broke the seal, and read as follows :—

“ ‘ DEAREST KATE,—If you possibly can, meet me on the Halifax road, near the Hen and Chickens. I will be there at eleven, and will wait till two in the hope of seeing you. I have something very important to communicate. My father intends having an interview with your father the day after to-morrow. I would have ridden over to the Hatch, only you gave me such good reasons for not doing so, or even coming near the place at present. In haste.

“ ‘ Ever affectionately yours,

“ ‘ GEORGE BOWMAN.’

“ ‘ The Hen and Chickens, a roadside inn, was distant from the Hatch (the name of my father’s house) about six miles ; and, when I received my lover’s letter, it was nearly

half-past ten o'clock. I flew to the stables, and ordered the groom to saddle my horse. To my disgust, he informed me that the animal was as lame as a cat. I then ordered him to put my saddle on Marlborough, a second hunter of my father's. The groom told me that the horse had been taken to a point called Milebush, where the squire expected to pick him up fresh. I then said, "Saddle the old mare," and was given to understand that she had gone to the farrier's to be shod. What was to be done? I deliberated for a few minutes, and then ordered the groom to take my side-saddle and bridle, and follow me to Squire Pack's, and hastily attiring myself in my riding-habit and hat, I ran across the fields as fast as I could, and made for the stables of our neighbour. The only saddle-horse in the squire's stables at the time was a magnificent thoroughbred colt, which had just been broken in; and this colt the squire's groom was not disposed to saddle for me without the squire's personal order. Becoming very impatient, for it then wanted only three minutes to eleven, I shook my whip at the groom, and said: "Saddle him this instant. Refuse at your peril! You shall be discharged this very night!" All Squire Pack's servants, as well as our own, believed that I was to be John Pack's wife, and the groom, fearful of that gentleman's wrath, no longer hesitated to obey my instructions. The colt was saddled and brought out. I mounted him, and laid him along the road at the very top of his speed, perfectly satisfied that John Pack would take care that my father never heard of my adventure, and that *his* father would say nothing about it—determined, as I was, to have a note for John, to be delivered on his return from the chase.

"It was exactly nineteen minutes past eleven when I arrived at the Hen and Chickens, and found George Bowman waiting for me. He had walked over from his father's house. The colt I had ridden was so bathed in perspiration that I alighted, and caused him to be taken into a shed

and rubbed down. While the stable-boys were so engaged, George and I walked along the road, and discoursed intently on our affairs for more than an hour and a half. We then returned to the inn, and I gave orders for the colt to be saddled. But, alas! the colt was not in the stable wherein he had been placed after he had been rubbed down, nor was a traveller, who was dressed like a gentleman, and who had come to the inn to bait his jaded horse shortly after my arrival, to be found on the premises, though his horse was in one of the stalls—a horse that must have been a very swift and valuable creature in his day, but then rather old and broken-winded. There could be no doubt that this person, whoever he might be, had made the exchange, and ridden away unseen while the stable-boys were taking their dinner. A well-dressed man had ridden swiftly past George and myself whilst we were walking on the road; but we were far too much engrossed in conversation to take any particular notice of himself or the steed he was riding. Under these awkward and distressing circumstances, I scarcely knew what to do. It was now past two o'clock, and I was anxious to return to my home. I, therefore (accompanied by George Bowman to the very edge of our grounds), proceeded on foot. As soon as I was in my own room I divested myself of my riding-habit, and wrote a letter to John Pack, requesting him to see me at the earliest moment possible. It was past four o'clock when my father returned, and the moment I saw him I discovered that he was much the worse for the refreshment he had taken while absent from home. He told me, and it was quite true, that Jack Pack had had a bad fall in the field, had broken his thigh and smashed his head, and that he was then lying in a dangerous state at a public-house not far from Bradford. I begged of him to let me go and see the sufferer. But he said No! and then informed me that he had had such a violent quarrel with Squire Pack, that they could never be on speaking terms again. It was all about the settlements,

he said ; that the old thief wanted to hold off coming down with any money till his death ; that he (Squire Pack) had broken his word ; that he (my father) had given him a good bellyful of his mind ; that he told the squire that neither he nor his father before him were born in wedlock ; and that, after all, it would be a disgrace for a Crawford to have a Pack for a husband. All this distressed me very much ; but I still hoped that this, like their other quarrels, would be made up ere long, and that, in the mean time, poor John Pack would recover, and Sir Francis Bowman tempt my father to listen to the liberal proposals he was about to make to him with respect to my union with George. It was, however, a frightfully anxious night that which I passed. My sleep, when it at last stole over me, was a troubled one, and my dreams a succession of horror upon horror. When I awoke, I fancied that all was a dream—the accident to John Pack, the quarrel between my father and the squire, the meeting between myself and George Bowman, and the loss of the colt at the Hen and Chickens. But, alas ! I was speedily awakened to the reality, by my father calling out “Kate ! Kate ! Come here ! What have you been about ? Here are the officers of justice come to take you before the magistrate ! ” I ran down stairs, confessed everything, and entreated him to forgive me. Like most of the old squires, he was a very violent and headstrong man, and on this occasion his anger was terrific. “Take her ! ” he cried to the officers. “Take her away ! Let her be hanged, for all I care ! She deserves it for deceiving me ! ”

“It seems that as soon as Squire Pack heard of my taking the colt away, he vowed that he would have me tried for horse-stealing, and thus would he disgrace the man who had called him such vile names and said such bitter things to him. And, in fulfilment of this vow, he went to the nearest magistrate, accompanied by his groom and another servant, and made a deposition upon oath. The magistrate

was an old clergyman, to whom Squire Pack had given the "living," and who was in the habit of responding the words "of course," to every sentence the squire uttered. A warrant for my apprehension was immediately issued, and I was taken into custody. What happened before the clerical magistrate I cannot recollect; but I can remember being asked several times, "What has become of the colt?" and replying, "I don't know." The consequence was, I was committed to take my trial at the forthcoming assizes, and was meanwhile sent to prison.

"Whilst I was in those cold and dismal cells, my father never came near me; nor did he write to me, or even send me a message. The only person whom I saw—and that was in the presence of the jailer—was George Bowman, who did all in his power to console me, although, poor boy, his face and shrunken form plainly betrayed that he was bordering on insanity caused by grief. George told me that Sir Francis Bowman had spoken to Squire Pack; but the squire would not listen to him, and that he had declined to receive the value, or double the value, of the colt which had been "stolen" by me—swearing that "the law should take its course."

"The day of trial came, and I was arraigned. George Bowman had retained an able lawyer to defend me, but his advocacy was of no avail. He urged that I had not taken the colt with the intention of stealing it, but of returning it after I had ridden it. To this the other counsel replied, "Why didn't she return it?" "Because it was stolen from her at the inn," was the rejoinder. This the jury regarded as a very fond (foolish) tale, and found me guilty; whereupon the judge put on the black cap, and sentenced me to be hanged by the neck until I was dead!

"What happened afterwards—whom I saw, or what they said—I know not. I was in a perfect lethargy, and did not recover my senses until more than half of the voyage to the colony was completed."

Here the old lady paused for a brief while, and then resumed.

"What Kate's sufferings must have been, when she was conscious of what was passing around her, it would, indeed, be difficult to describe. She had not only to bear the companionship of the three hundred degraded wretches who were her fellow-passengers, but to withstand the unseemly attentions of the Navy surgeon, who had charge of the convicts, and who had become enamoured of her extreme beauty. The captain of the vessel, also, fell desperately in love with her, and on several occasions proposed to marry her, abandon the sea, and settle in the colony. The surgeon having heard of this, quarrelled with the captain, and threatened Kate that if she ever spoke or listened to the captain again, he would have her hair cut off, and that she should be publicly flogged. (He had the power, you know, of inflicting such punishment upon any female convict who incurred his displeasure.) The captain being informed by one of his officers of this threat, thrashed the surgeon on the quarter-deck, to the delight of the women, who looked on and cried 'Bravo!' The surgeon called the guard—fifty soldiers (recruits). But as each man had his sweetheart on board, and as the cause was regarded as the 'women's cause,' the guard declined to interfere in the matter. This was a sad state of affairs, no doubt, so far as discipline was concerned; but it tended very materially to Kate Crawford's advantage. Amidst the strife and contending passions of the two men, she was safe in that sense of the word most desirable to herself. When the ship arrived in the harbour, the surgeon preferred a complaint against the captain and his officers. There was an investigation, which resulted in a manner rather prejudicial to the surgeon, and the Governor gave an order that he was not to be permitted to depart the colony until the pleasure of his Majesty's Government was known. Such pleasure was known about a year afterwards. It was to the effect that

the surgeon was to be sent to England, under an arrest, in the first man-of-war that touched at Port Jackson. He had made several statements and admissions at the investigation to warrant and insure his dismissal from the service of the State.

"Soon after her arrival, Kate had to undergo fresh persecutions. She was 'applied for' by at least twenty unmarried officers, each of whom was anxious to have her 'assigned' to him as a servant. It was not uncommon in those days for officers to marry their assigned servants, and make them sell rum at the back doors of their private houses, or quarters, to private soldiers and convicts at a dump (fifteenpence) a glass. It was by these means that many of them amassed their large wealth in ready money."

"Did the Government know of this?" I asked.

"That is a question I decline to answer," replied the old lady. "But this I know, that when the duty was taken off rum imported to the colony, very few people were licensed to keep public-houses. However, none of these gentlemen were destined to be the master of Kate Crawford. The statement she made at the investigation aroused the sympathy of Mrs. Macquarie (the Governor's wife), who enlisted the respect and affection of all who knew her. Mrs. Macquarie was driven in her private carriage to the factory at Paramatta—an institution to which all unassigned convicts were taken on their arrival in Sydney—and had an interview with the unfortunate girl. I accompanied Mrs. Macquarie on that occasion.

"When Kate was brought by the matron-superintendent into the little room in which Mrs. Macquarie and myself were seated, she was dressed in the uniform garb of females under sentence of transportation; the commonest calico print gown, a white apron, white cap without frills or strings, thickly-soled shoes, and no stockings. The dresses were made short, so that the ankles and the lower part of the legs were visible, while the arms were perfectly bare

from the elbow-joint. Nevertheless, in those hideous garments, Kate still preserved the bearing of a well-bred gentlewoman. There was no low curtsey—no ‘May it please your ladyship’—no folding of the hands; but there was a gentle inclination of the head and of the body, and an honest, modest look, which would at once have satisfied the most suspicious person in the world that the girl was incapable of committing any crime. And when Mrs. Macquarie, with a graceful movement of the hand, requested her to be seated, she thanked and obliged the old lady, simultaneously.

“‘I have not come to see you out of mere curiosity,’ said Mrs. Macquarie, ‘nor have I come to gloat over the sight of a young lady in such a position as that in which you are now placed. I simply come, armed with the authority of the Governor, to know by what means your sojourn in this colony may be rendered the least painful.’

“On hearing these words of unexpected kindness, the poor girl burst into passionate tears, and Mrs. Macquarie and myself followed her example.

“When she was calmed, and in a condition to listen, Mrs. Macquarie again put the question to her, and the poor girl replied, in broken accents—‘Do with me, or for me, whatever your kind heart may dictate.’

“‘Then you shall live,’ said Mrs. Macquarie, ‘in private apartments, in the house of Mr. Kherwin, the chief constable of Paramatta, whose wife shall make you as comfortable as circumstances will admit of. Under that roof you will be perfectly safe, and protected from every species of annoyance. And if you will allow me, I will send you the means of providing yourself with more suitable apparel than that you are now wearing.’

“Poor Kate expressed her gratitude in becoming terms, and we took our departure. Mrs. Macquarie then ordered the coachman to drive to the house of the chief constable, and expressed to that functionary her wishes, which were

tantamount to orders; and that very night Kate Crawford occupied a room in the small but cleanly cottage of the Kherwins. They were very respectable people, the Kherwins; and Mrs. Macquarie arranged that Kate was to board with them. I don't know whether Kherwin and his wife were recompensed by a payment of money, or a grant of land, but I am quite satisfied that they lost nothing by the attentions they showed to their unhappy charge.

"Whenever the major and myself went to Paramatta, we never failed to pay Kate a visit, and have a long chat with her. On one occasion she told us that she had received a reply to a letter she had written to a friend in England. Her old lover, George Bowman, she said, had, shortly after her conviction, become insane, and was a hopeless lunatic in an asylum. Her father had married a young damsel, and had by her an infant son. John Pack, when he recovered, and came to know of the cruel course of conduct his father had pursued, quarrelled with the old man, flogged him in his passion, and then married Peggy, and became a farmer on his own account. Squire Pack, too, had married a young maiden, and had made up his quarrel with Squire Crawford.

"Kate was only three years a prisoner of the Crown, or (to speak in the coarser phrase) a convict. General Macquarie, one morning, accompanied by Mrs. Macquarie, all the chief officials, and their wives, journeyed from Sydney to Paramatta. The cortége drew up opposite to the chieft constable's cottage. The general and Mrs. Macquarie were the only persons who alighted. After a brief absence they returned, bringing with them poor Kate Crawford, whom the general handed into his carriage, and then ordered the postilion to go to Government House. (There is a Government House in Paramatta.) There, in the presence of all assembled, the dear old general presented Kate with the king's pardon, and at the same time handed to her a piece of parchment, sealed with the seal of the colony, and bearing the general's own signature. It was the title-deed of a

grant of land, of two thousand acres, within forty miles of Sydney, and situated in one of the best and most alluvial districts. This ceremony over, the old general led her to the dining-room, where luncheon was ready. The poor girl—she was then only twenty-three—was evidently much overcome by her feelings; but she struggled hard to subdue them, and succeeded."

"And what became of her?" I asked.

"You shall hear," said the old lady. "While she was under the protection of the chief constable, Kate was not idle. She assisted Mrs. Kherwin in all matters connected with the household. The cows, the pigs, the poultry, &c., had each and all some share of her attention. And she kept the accounts—for the Kherwins sold the product of the animals which they reared. In short, although she did not cease to be what the vulgar call a "fine lady," she made herself a woman of business, and a shrewd one too,—not that she ever took an advantage of those with whom she dealt.

"Now free to do what she pleased, and with a grant of land in her possession, Kate resolved upon remaining in the colony, and devoting herself to farming and the rearing of cattle. Both the general and Mrs. Macquarie were so fond of her, that any favour she asked was at once accorded. She applied for fifteen convicts; they were assigned to her. She then engaged a very respectable overseer—a man of firmness and integrity. She borrowed 300*l.*, wherewith to commence operations, and build a house. At the end of two years she paid off this debt, and had a considerable balance in hand. The wheat and the Indian maize grown upon her farm always brought the highest prices in the market, and she was equally fortunate with her live stock. Many offers of marriage were made to her, year after year, by persons in eligible positions and circumstances; but Mrs. Crawford, as she now called herself, had determined on remaining single. She had built for herself a vehicle called a sulky, a gig which had a seat for the accommoda-

tion of one person only, and in this she used to drive to Sydney once in every year. Upon all these occasions she was a guest at Government House. In 1823, she was the owner of 12,000*l.* in money, which was invested on mortgage of landed property in the town of Sydney; and in 1837, when I last saw her, and laughingly said—‘ You must be frightfully rich by this time, Kitty,’ she replied—‘ Well, if I were to die now, there would be about 120,000*l.* to be divided amongst those who are mentioned in my will. Your boys are down for a few pounds—not that I fancy they will ever want them.’ ”

“ Is she still alive ? ” I asked.

“ Yes,” replied the old lady, “ and likely to live for the next twenty years ; for although she had many days of sorrow, she never had one of sickness, to my knowledge.”

[Since the history of Mrs. Crawford was related to me, she has departed this life. The gentleman who gave me this information lived many years in Australia. On asking him what she died possessed of, he answered—“ The value of her estate, real and personal, was as nearly as possible half a million sterling.”]

XI.

ANNIE SAINT FELIX.

“ SHE was not handsome ; but she was very, very pretty—the prettiest little Irish girl that I ever beheld ! ” said the old lady. “ She had golden hair and dark-blue eyes, a compact and elastic figure, and the tiniest feet and hands. She was not more than eighteen when she landed in Sydney as a convict, under sentence of transportation for life. She did not arrive till 1827 or 1828 ; and during the administration of Sir Ralph Darling. The Special system was

now utterly defunct, and all convicts were to be treated alike, without the least reference to what had been their former condition.

"In point of strictness, this was, no doubt, very proper and very just; but to those who remembered the lenient administration of General Macquarie and Sir Thomas Brisbane, it appeared harsh in the extreme.

"The major and myself left Sydney shortly after the departure of General Macquarie from the colony, and went to live on an estate, which had been granted to us, in the vicinity of Campbell Town. The major sold his commission, and had now nothing further to do with public life. He was still in the commission of the peace; but that was all.

"The girl, Annie Saint Felix, whom I have mentioned, was assigned to some neighbours of ours (our nearest neighbours, for they lived only six miles off), the Prestons, and very nice people they were. Captain Preston early in life had held a commission in the Foot Guards, and inherited a considerable fortune; but having run through his money, he sold his commission, and retired with the proceeds to the wilds of Australia, and became a settler. Mrs. Preston, who was a lady of aristocratic birth and breeding, was one of the kindest-hearted beings in existence, and their sons and daughters, a goodly number of each, ranging from fourteen to three years of age, were, without any exception, remarkably fine and well-behaved children. The eldest was a daughter.

"One morning I had a visit from Mrs. Preston. She wanted to ask my advice, she said, on a very delicate matter, that she scarcely liked to act upon her own judgment, and Captain Preston had declared himself incompetent to assist her. On asking her what was her difficulty, the following dialogue took place between us:—

"'You are aware,' she began, 'that I applied for a needlewoman?'

"'Yes,' I replied. 'Have you got one?'

“ ‘No ; but a young girl has been assigned to us who can do needlework.’

“ ‘Then, that is all you require of her ?’

“ ‘True. But she happens to be a young lady by birth, and is, moreover, a highly-educated girl.’

“ ‘Well, she is none the worse for those qualities, as you only want her for needlework. What was her crime ? Did you ask her ?’

“ ‘Yes, and she replied, “Murder, madam ! My brother was hanged ; but I am sorry to say they spared my life !”

“ ‘Murder ! Dear me. Did you question her further ?’

“ ‘No,’ said Mrs. Preston. ‘When she pronounced the word murder, my blood ran cold, and I trembled from head to foot. Now, what I wish to ask you is, Would you keep a girl under your roof who had been guilty of such a crime ?’

“ ‘What sort of a disposition has she ?’

“ ‘She is as gentle, seemingly, as she is pretty and graceful. It was, indeed, her kind and gentle manner towards the children, and her well-selected language, that induced me to say to her, on the third day she had been with us—yesterday, in fact—when we were alone in the nursery, “Dear me ! Annie, what could have brought a girl of your stamp and education to this colony ?” Of course, as soon as she pronounced the word “Murder !” I lost all power of speech, and have scarcely spoken to her since. To tell you the truth, I feel rather afraid of her.’

“ ‘Pretty girls have often a wicked expression of countenance. Has she one ?’

“ ‘On the contrary, and she has a voice like that of a bird. I wish you would come over, see her, talk to her, and tell me what you think of her. You can stay the night, you know.’

“ Mrs. Preston had aroused my curiosity. When I was one of the lady visiting matrons of the factory at Paramatta, I had discoursed with several women who had committed murder in England, Ireland, or Scotland ; but they were

all women of a very inferior station in life. I agreed to accompany my friend, and as soon as the major had completed his (unpaid) magisterial duties on the bench, and had returned home, we all three set out together; Mrs. Preston driving me in her gig, and the major riding, on the right-hand side, on horseback.

“When I first saw the girl, I was very much struck with her appearance. Her hair was brushed back off her forehead, and arranged as plainly as possible. On her head was a little white three-cornered cap, such as all maid-servants wore in those days; her dress was of common drugget, of a dark chocolate colour, and around her slender waist was tied a gingham apron, which Mrs. Preston had given to her. She was then sewing and talking to the little children, who were playing around her knees. When we left the nursery, I exclaimed to Mrs. Preston—

“‘That a murderer! I do not believe her.’

“‘But,’ urged Mrs. Preston, ‘she says she is; and why should she confess to having committed so diabolical a crime if it be untrue?’

“‘While Captain Preston and the major were drinking their claret after dinner, and were talking about their crops and their cattle, Mrs. Preston and myself paid another visit to the nursery. By the light of the wood-fire and the candle, the girl looked even prettier than by daylight. After Mrs. Preston had put several questions to her, concerning the children and the work she had in hand, and had received the girl’s replies, I said—

“‘Your mistress has told me that which I can scarcely credit. She tells me you were convicted of murder.’”

“‘It is quite true, madam,’ said the girl, blushing almost crimson.”

“‘What could have prompted a girl like you,’ I said, ‘to think, even, of taking the life of a fellow-creature?’”

“‘I will tell you, madam,’ she sighed.

“‘Sit down, Annie; you must be tired after your day’s

labours,' said Mrs. Preston, taking a chair near the fire (an example which I followed).

"The girl obeyed—sat down opposite to us, and gazing steadfastly at the blazing logs on the hearth, in the following words told her story:—

"My brother (who was five years my senior) and myself were orphans, and were living under the roof of an uncle (my father's eldest brother), on an island in the north of Ireland. We had a cousin, one of the loveliest and most amiable girls that ever lived, and she was engaged to be married to a Mr. Kennedy, a gentleman of large property, who lived on the same island, and within a few miles of my uncle's house. When all was prepared for the wedding, this gentleman—if he deserves the title of gentleman—broke off the match. That was cruel enough, seeing that our cousin loved him devotedly; but he had the wickedness to express, as a reason for his baseness, a suspicion which, if true, would have blasted not only my cousin's character, but that also of my brother. The horrible nature of this accusation, and its utter falsity, added to her disappointment, so preyed upon the girl's mind, that, after pining in hopeless grief for a month, she sank into her grave: dying of a broken heart. On the night of her burial, my brother, frantic with rage and grief, vowed that on the first opportunity that presented itself, he would take Mr. Kennedy's life. I knelt beside him, and vowed that I would share in his revenge.

"For weeks and months Mr. Kennedy, who knew the determined character of my brother, and of the vow that he had made, kept within the boundaries of his own estate. This, however, did not calm our passionate feelings. On the contrary, it exasperated them, and our purpose had become the more settled. Often and often would my brother say to me, and I to him, 'Are you steadfast in your vow?' And the answer we invariably gave each other was 'Yes.' One afternoon—about four months after

the death of our cousin—one of the servants informed my brother that Mr. Kennedy had been seen riding in the direction of a little fishing-town. He immediately ordered his own horse and mine to be saddled; and arming himself with a brace of pistols, we both galloped in pursuit of Mr. Kennedy. We had not ridden more than three miles when we saw him. As we galloped on the turf, and not on the hard road, he did not hear the sound of our horses' hoofs until we were close upon him. As soon as he recognized us, he put spurs to his horse; but his steed was not so swift of foot as were ours, and, just as we were entering the town, we overtook him. He then became deadly pale, and begged for mercy. But in vain. I seized his horse's bridle, and said, 'Now, Francis,' whereupon my brother put his pistol to Mr. Kennedy's left breast, and drew the trigger. Mr. Kennedy fell from his horse—a dead man! Such was the crime for which my brother lost his life on the scaffold, and for which I was sent to this colony for the term of my natural life. I wished to die with my brother; but it was willed otherwise."

"And do you not repent?" I asked.

"Yes," the girl sighed. "I try to think of my cousin's sufferings, and of her death, and of the pain, the agony of mind which my uncle and every member of our family endured, when Mr. Kennedy falsely branded us with dis-honour; but the deep dye of my crime weakens even those recollections, and my life is a life of remorse and mental expiation." Here she paused; and, hiding her face with her hands, she shed tears.

"At this moment Mrs. Preston's eldest son, a boy of twelve years of age, came into the nursery, and said, 'Papa wants some more wine, mamma. Will you send him the keys of the cellarette?' On observing the girl shedding tears, he approached her; and, placing his hand gently on her shoulder, he said, in a very gentle tone of voice, which touched both his mother and myself—

“‘What is the matter, Annie? I hope mamma has not been scolding you?’

“‘No, Master Charles,’ she replied. ‘Your mamma has been very kind to me.’

“‘Then why do you cry?’ the boy demanded.

“Mrs. Preston and myself rejoined our husbands, leaving Master Charles with the girl, to whom, in common with all his brothers and sisters, he was already very much attached. Even before we left the room, he patted her upon the head, and begged her to dry her eyes.

“Captain Preston and the major were both much moved, when we recounted to them what we had just heard. Had it been previous to 1820, which was about the date of General Macquarie’s departure from Sydney, we should have had very little difficulty in doing for Annie St. Felix what had been done for Kate Crawford; or, at all events, we could have obtained for her a conditional pardon, which would have rendered her a free woman in the colony and its dependencies. But with the then Governor, so far from having any interest, the major and Captain Preston were such objects of dislike that they were never invited to the Government House. This was in consequence of the opinions they had openly expressed of the Governor’s conduct, in having two private soldiers flogged in the barrack-square, and drummed out of the regiment, after they had been sentenced to be transported by the civil tribunal. The fact was that the men died of the severe flogging they had received—the one in the jail, and the other in the general hospital, to which institution he was removed in his last moments. The names of these men were Sadds and Thompson.

“So far as my husband was concerned, an order was secretly passed that no more convict-servants were to be assigned to him; but to Captain Preston this order had not yet been extended, inasmuch as he had been less emphatic in his denunciations. Into the merits of this question I

have no wish to enter. No doubt too much leniency had been shown during the two preceding administrations; but I am, nevertheless, disposed to think that Sir Ralph Darling rushed into the opposite extreme, and by the adoption of so severe a code led to those dissensions between the governed and the governing which convulsed the colony till the arrival of his successor, Sir Richard Bourke."

"But what became of Annie St. Felix?" I asked.

"She remained with the Prestons for five years. She was to them a perfect treasure—acting, as she did, as house-keeper, nurse, and governess. Go whenever you would into the house, you found Annie always busily engaged, and yet always in demand. From morning till night, from one quarter or the other, there was a call for Annie! So patiently, and so quietly, too, did she perform her multifarious duties, that it was really a pleasure to watch her movements. Captain and Mrs. Preston respected her; their children loved her tenderly; the male convicts on the estate obeyed her orders with cheerfulness, and the female convicts (this was, perhaps, the highest testimonial in her favour) abstained from reminding her that she was only their equal. As for the guests who were entertained by the Prestons, they not only admired Annie's pretty person and most decorous demeanour, but they envied the lady of the house and her extraordinary good fortunes. I need scarcely say that she was treated as a gentlewoman, who, when a young girl, had assisted in the commission of the greatest of all crimes under very peculiar if not extenuating circumstances, and whose conduct, apart from her crime, was entirely blameless. She did not, of course, sit at the same table with her employers [I cannot speak of them as master and mistress], but she had a room to herself, and seemingly comprehended her position so completely, that she was never guilty of the slightest encroachment.

"After the birth of her eleventh child, Mrs. Preston had a very serious and painful illness. Annie tended her with

all that care and affection of which her gentle nature was so capable; and at the same time, kept the house quiet, the establishment in order, and Captain Preston's wants [he was selfish and exacting, though a well-bred man, and a perfect gentleman] ministered unto in every respect. But Mrs. Preston sank under her grievous malady—and died, to the great sorrow of every one who had enjoyed her acquaintance.

"For a year after his wife's death, Captain Preston never left his home—never went beyond the precincts of his new domain. But at the expiration of that period, he paid us a visit, and as it was near our dinner-hour, six o'clock, we invited him to stay and partake of the meal with us. He assented. We offered to send over a groom to his house to make known that he might not be expected until after ten or eleven. He replied that we need not do so, as he had intimated to Annie that he intended to stay the night at Macquarie Dale [such was the name of our estate]. We were rejoiced to hear this, albeit there was something in Captain Preston's manner and discourse which betokened that he was very unquiet and unsettled in his mind.

"During dinner, and for some time afterwards, the captain was not only absent, silent, or incoherent when he spoke, but he glared occasionally at the major and myself after a very odd and suspicious fashion. The dinner over, the cloth removed, and the dessert placed upon the table, our guest said that his object in paying us a visit that day was to impart some information, and that he hoped and trusted the course he was about to pursue would not involve the forfeiture of our friendship. 'You are aware,' proceeded Captain Preston, 'of the situation in which I was placed, when I had the misfortune to lose my wife, notwithstanding I could command the services of one on whom such implicit confidence could be placed. I allude, of course, to Annie St. Felix. To all of my children, from my daughter, who is now verging into womanhood, down to

the little one, which can scarcely walk alone, her behaviour has been such that my esteem and regard for her has at length resolved itself into an ardent affection. I love Annie St. Felix, and if she will accept the offer I am about to make her, she shall become my wife. Yes, I will marry my bondswoman, for in strictness that is her title. Whatever may be the opinion of the world, I will brave it.'

"'She is a worthy creature,' said the major, heartily; 'and with such a partner there would be no particular valour in braving the opinion of the world. In the presence of my own wife, I desire to tell you, Preston, that if I were in your position, my own feelings should be my sole counsellor.'

"'You are silent,' said the captain, addressing me, and placing his elbow on the table, he rested his head on the palm of his hand, his long brown hair standing out between his white and tapered fingers. He gazed at me very intently when he uttered those three words—'You are silent.'

"'I was thinking,' I replied to him, in a solemn tone of voice, and meeting his gaze with one of equal intensity, 'of a scene which I should never have mentioned, or alluded to, had it not been for what you have just stated.'

"'What scene?' he demanded, rather abruptly.

"'A scene that occurred on the night which preceded that of your wife's death. I was with her, if you remember. Annie St. Felix, worn out and exhausted by continual watching, had fallen asleep in the arm-chair. Your wife motioned me to place my ear to her lips. I did so. With an effort she raised her head from the pillow, fixed her eyes on the sleeping girl, and whispered to me, 'If my husband should ever think of marrying again, I hope that she will be his choice.'"

"Captain Preston rose passionately from his chair, and grasped my hand. 'You have plucked from my mind the most anxious doubt that for several weeks past has literally

haunted it. I have asked myself over and over again—What would she have said?’

“‘Have you put the question to Miss Saint Felix?’ the major inquired.

“‘No,’ said Captain Preston; ‘but I will do so tomorrow.’

“Annie at first objected to become the wife of Captain Preston, although she was very much attached to him. She was afraid that his union with her would prejudice his position in the colony, and eventually make him unhappy. But at last her scruples were overcome, and on one lovely winter’s morning in the month of June, Captain Preston led Annie to the altar, where their hands were joined. The major and myself, as well as those neighbours with whom we associated, were present; and, albeit the church in point of structure bore a very strong resemblance to an English barn, and there were no merry peals of bells, still there were joyous faces to greet the newly-wedded pair when the ceremony concluded. They lived very happily together, and Annie became the mother of a little boy.

“About eighteen months after this event Captain Preston unexpectedly inherited a large property in England. The amount of income may have been exaggerated; but rumour put it down at fifteen thousand pounds a year. The captain’s presence was required in England, but he would not leave the colony until he could be accompanied by his wife. Remember that she was still a convict under sentence of transportation for the term of her natural life, though the most debased and brutal person in existence would never have dreamt of reminding her of that frightful fact.

“It must have been a bitterly painful interview that which Captain Preston had with the Governor of the colony; but it resulted in the removal of the obstacle which lay in the way of Annie’s returning to Europe, and they left New South Wales, to the very great regret of my husband and myself, and of many others.

"The last time I saw Annie before she left the colony was in the streets of Sydney. She was leaning on the arm of her step-son, Charles Preston, who was then a tall youth of twenty years of age, and an ensign in a regiment of foot. He regarded his mother (as he always spoke of her) with a look so replete with filial affection—spoke to her so kindly and so gently—seemed so proud of her (for she was still a very pretty woman), that my liking for him was far in excess of what it had been when he was only a boy."

XII.

A RAMBLE WITH THE BLACKS.

A FRIEND of mine had a sheep "run" at a place called Booreea, distant from Sydney about 190 miles in the Bathurst direction; and on one occasion, when he was about to visit the "run," in order to witness the washing and shearing, I agreed to accompany him. On the day appointed we set out on horseback, and travelled as lightly as possible. In my cloak I had two shirts, two pairs of socks, a comb, and tooth-brush, two silk pocket-handkerchiefs, and a cake of Windsor soap. My friend's luggage was uniform with my own; and, like mine, was strapped across the pommel of his saddle. Our attire was colonial to the last degree: dark corduroy trousers, fitting loosely, except at the knees; shooting-coat and waistcoat, of coarse dark-blue cloth; and Leghorn hats, with very wide brims. In those days it signified very little how we attired ourselves; everybody knew us, and all about us, and our affairs. The colony even then—in 1835—was, to all intents and purposes, a monopoly, and in the hands of a comparatively few people; the assignment system was still in vogue; my friend "owned" about eighty-five convicts, and I, too, had a limited number. We little dreamt in those days, that ere

long so many millions of tons of “free flesh” would be landed alive on those shores.

Onward we rode to Paramatta, fifteen miles distant from Sydney, where we refreshed our horses and ourselves; and then pushed on to Penrith, where we stayed for the night, under the hospitable roof of Sir John Jamieson. We had only ridden forty miles, but as we intended to ride sixty on the following day, we deemed it prudent to give the horses a long rest. Sir John Jamieson was a member of the council, and with other members of the council (all large land and stock holders) opposed the petition of those colonists (not large land and stock holders) to the throne to have transportation to Sydney abolished. The reader must know that the abolition of transportation to New South Wales affected all the large holders of convict servants, just as the abolition of slavery in the West Indies affected the great sugar-planters. It well-nigh ruined the whole of them. Many, indeed, were *completely* ruined: men holding thousands of head of cattle and tens of thousands of sheep.

To carry on such concerns with “free labour” was out of the question. The emigrants, when they began to pour in, demanded and held out for high wages. The man who said he was a shepherd, or a stockman, required from twenty to twenty-five shillings a week, a full ration, two suits of slop clothing a year, and a blanket. Knowing nothing of the pursuit for which he hired himself, but labouring under the false impression that anybody could be a stockman or a shepherd, he was in most cases worse than useless. Having no dread of the lash; no dread of having his tea, sugar, rum, tobacco, and soap stopped; and being put on government allowance, namely, nine pounds of coarse flour, and seven pounds of salt—*very* salt—beef, or five of pork—*very* salt pork—he was in most cases careless, idle, and if spoken to on the subject, insolent and aggravating. Many of my friends cut the throats of their sheep, flocks of eight and ten thousand, for the sake of their fat;

and slaughtered whole herds of cattle—fat oxen, milch cows, and young calves, for the sake of their hides! In many cases, where the stations were very far distant, even the hides and the tallow were not taken from the animals. The expense of conveying such commodities to Sydney would have exceeded the amount they would have realized in the market, and the sheep and the cattle were left to rot on the abandoned station. I have often since put to myself the question—"Why not have suffered them to live, and go wherever they listed?" There was no lack of pasture for their maintenance. It is true that the sheep would have been scattered and gradually devoured by the aboriginal dogs; but not so with the cattle, the breed of which, however, would have deteriorated, and by this time would have been as small as the oxen on the Malabar coast.

Some large holders—only a few—*did* suffer their stock to go free; but the majority immolated them, as sacrifices on the shrine of departed prosperity. A ruined man in his wrath and despair is rarely in a condition to reason. None, save the lords of Leadenhall Street on the 1st of September, 1858, can comprehend the feelings of the lords of Botany Bay when that fatal fiat went forth—"No more convicts!" Yes. None save those who were awakened to the reflection—"No more East India Company," can entertain even a glimmer of the rancour which swelled each stockholder's breast against the man who moved "that horrible resolution" in the House of Commons. Not even the advocacy of the late Charles Buller, M.P., to whom we paid by subscription 500*l.* a year for his advocacy of our "interests" in the House, could prevail; and we lost *that* cause which he took in hand for us, although he afterwards gained another cause for us, namely, an "Elective Representative Assembly." You may frown, Mr. Roebuck. You may smile, Mr. Isaac Butt; but what I have stated is the truth; I know it, not from hearsay, but of my own personal knowledge; for the hand that traces these lines sealed and ad-

dressed two of the letters to "Charles Buller, Esq., M.P.,"
enclosing the money, in all 1,000*l.* But I am digressing.

On the following morning, we resumed our journey, and crossed the Blue Mountains. By the way, the friend with whom I was travelling had been one of the three gentlemen who first explored that region, crossed those mountains, and discovered the glorious plains of Bathurst that lie beyond them. The scenery in these mountains is neither grand nor imposing. Here and there you meet with a pretty view; but upon the whole the panorama is dull, flat, monotonous, and uninteresting—at all events, in comparison with mountain scenery in every other part of the known world that I have visited.

At noon it began to rain very heavily, and we were drenched to the skin. We did not mind that, for the morning had been close and hot, and this bath from the clouds was extremely refreshing. Moreover, the earth panted for moisture, as did the trees, and the shrubs, and the plants. Nor did the rain impede our progress. We were mounted on good cattle, which dashed over the ground without requiring either whip or spur; all we had to do was to hold them, and keep them on the track. We did not, however, reach Bathurst that night. An adventure on the road detained us for more than an hour. We met a woman without bonnet or shoes, travelling towards Sydney. She was a good-looking woman, of about six-and-twenty years of age, and of a slim figure. She was Irish. At first we thought she was insane, and parleyed with her in that wild spot where we espied her. She told us a rather plausible story, in order to account for her whereabouts and pitiable condition; but in cross-examination she broke down, and confessed that she was an assigned servant, and had run away from her master, "because the mistress had ill-treated her." She had been seven days in the bush, she said, and had endured every species of hardship. We knew the family from which she had run away, and we promised

her that if she would return with us to Bathurst we would guarantee that her offence would be forgiven. She hesitated; whereupon we reminded her that she would be captured, to a certainty, ere long, and placed in the factory at Paramatta, where they would cut off all her beautiful black hair. She still hesitated, whereupon I gave her a draught of brandy out of a flask which I carried in my pocket. This appeal was all-powerful. She blessed us very fervently, and expressed her readiness to act upon our advice. I then placed her on my saddle, and loosening the "off" stirrup-leather threw it over the pommel, and contrived to give her a safe seat. I then got behind her, and, while she held on by the horse's mane, I fed her with some ham sandwiches, which she devoured voraciously.

Night was coming on, and we agreed to stay at a roadside inn, about twelve miles from Bathurst, and remain till daybreak. The inn was a slab hut, roofed with sheets of bark, and containing three apartments. One was occupied by the landlord, his wife, and seven children; another was "the public room," and the third apartment was the bedroom for travellers. The only refreshment that the inn could afford consisted of salt beef and "damper" (unleavened bread baked in ashes). The only liquor to be had there was rum, which was watered, and otherwise adulterated by Chili pods, to make it (as Falstaff says of ginger), "hot i' the mouth." There were no windows in the inn. They were not required, since the interstices between the slabs suffered the wind, the rain, and the light of day to penetrate simultaneously. The signboard, which was nailed to a tree near the abode, was rather an ambitious one—"The Royal Arms." The furniture was of the most primitive description imaginable; a table made out of some old beer-casks, benches of the iron-bark tree, and for stools, small blocks of limestone did duty. The bedsteads consisted of two benches placed crossways, one at the head, the other at the feet; on these were placed slabs of wood,

then a layer of straw, and over that a blanket not particularly clean. Sheets and counterpanes were dispensed with. The house was lighted by the large wood fire in the broad fireplace. We asked for candles, but there was “only half a one in the house,” the remnant of a tallow-dip, and that was stuck into the neck of an empty ginger-beer bottle. The bedroom we resigned to the unfortunate woman, and my friend and myself spread our cloaks on some fresh straw, threw ourselves down thereon, and slept as soundly as though we had been reposing upon beds of down, and velvet pillows.

At daylight the children of the landlord awakened us by the noise they made while dressing. We arose, shook ourselves, washed in a bucket of water, combed our hair, and thus completed our toilet. I ought not to omit to mention, perhaps, that the landlord’s wife rubbed our boots over, whilst they were on our feet, with a greasy cloth.

The unfortunate woman, whom we were taking back to her master and mistress, having breakfasted on the salt beef and damper, and some very weak brandy-and-water (the brandy from my flask)—for there was no tea, coffee, or milk to be had—we resumed our journey, and arrived at the inn at Bathurst at a quarter to nine o’clock. Here we had the good fortune to meet with the master of the fugitive, who promised us that he would respect the guarantee we had given to her: and he kept his word; for on our return we paid him a visit, and saw our late charge waiting at table.

Insomuch as neither my friend nor myself were at all fatigued, and as our horses were very fresh, we resolved on proceeding as soon as we had breakfasted. The inn at Bathurst was admirably found in all that travellers require, and the accommodation for man and horse comparatively excellent. The charges were high, but, under the circumstances, anything but exorbitant: a fowl, 5s.; eggs, 6d. each; a bottle of ale, 5s.; a glass of sherry, half-a-crown;

a cup of tea, 1s. 6d. At the period of which I am speaking no one would have thought of killing sheep. Just then the wool mania was at its height, and an ewe was worth from 2*l.* to 2*l.* 10*s.* Some persons who foresaw that it would not last long sold off, and realized enormous fortunes. Only those were ruined who held on till the crash came and convulsed the colony. Had my friend sold his sheep in 1837—and he had some half-dozen runs—he would have netted some 300,000*l.* In 1841-42 he was barely solvent! Such was the fluctuation in the value of colonial property.

It was much the same with land. In 1838 land near Sydney, or within seven miles, was worth 100*l.* an acre. In 1842, it was not worth 10*l.* an acre; in fact, it was unsaleable at any price.

But let us hasten to Booreea. After travelling all day through a variegated and picturesque country—for instance, at times the road passed through forests of gigantic trees; at times, the road passed through, or wound round, huge rocks of gray limestone; at times we might have fancied we were riding through downs which had been cultivated, albeit we knew they were as they had been left by the hand of the Creator—we arrived at a roadside inn, precisely such a one as I have already described, and found in stores equally well, or rather equally *badly*. This was the only halting-place on the road between Bathurst and Booreea and other sheep stations, the roads to which branched off from this point. The consequence was, that this little inn, the “General Macquarie,” was, if not much frequented, seldom without a traveller.

As we had done on the previous night, my friend and myself made our beds on the floor of the hut with some straw, and turned in all standing. Previously to doing so, however, we ate, with a keen appetite and relish, a hearty supper of damper and pork. Never shall I forget the terrible night I passed, pursued as I was by every species of monster that the imagination of man conjures up in his

brain during that troubled sleep, commonly called "nightmare."

At six o'clock on the following morning we started, and at four P.M. arrived at our destination; having accomplished the fifty miles in ten hours, without in the least fatiguing our horses.

The hut of the superintendent at Boorcea—a highly respectable young man of colonial extraction—was a tolerably comfortable abode. It was built of wooden slabs, but was "muddled" on the outside, and lime-whited, so that its appearance was rather cheerful as we approached it. In this hut there were apertures, the shape of windows, to let in the light, and shutters to keep out the cold, and wind, and rain, during the night. The furniture, too, though far from elegant, wore a comparatively civilized air. There were six strong chairs in the sitting-room, and a substantial cedar table, and there was a mantelpiece over the huge fireplace, on which were ranged crockery, plates, and tea-cups and saucers, instead of those tin utensils of the kind we had found at the roadside inns. On the floor was a thick layer of limestone, so pounded down as to make it resemble white slabs of marble. The ceiling—for the hut had a roof—was also lime-whited, and from it were suspended several sides of bacon, pigs' faces, and huge pieces of smoked beef. There were also poultry of every kind in the yard—and a flock of pigeons and several cows and calves in an adjacent paddock. In short, as far as eatables were concerned, we were now "in clover;" and what was of equal importance, the straw mattrasses and blankets upon which we had to sleep were as clean as possible. The superintendent did not expect a visit from his master, and when he came home, and found us in possession of his abode, he was not a little surprised. His kangaroo dogs, eight in number, had accompanied him in his rounds that day, and had killed a forester (a large species of kangaroo), the tail of which he brought home with him for soup. The tail of a kan-

garoo is a mass of [sinews, and the reader who has not tasted of the soup can have no idea how delicious it is, especially when flavoured with Harvey's sauce, or mushroom catsup, both of which were "in store;" for the superintendent (my friend and myself were happy to reflect) was one of those men who liked good living, even in the distant interior. The hut-keeper, moreover (a convict who had been originally a waiter at a London tavern), was an excellent cook, and, on the first evening of our arrival (as well as on subsequent evenings), gave us a most unexceptionable dinner, and served it up in a truly artistic style. There was the kangaroo-tail soup, a boiled leg of fresh pork, with pea-pudding, two pairs of very young and tender pigeons, macaroni, and cheese, and a pumpkin tart. The only liquor which the superintendent could afford to keep for his stray guests was some excellent Jamaica rum; and this, well diluted with water, we found extremely palatable.

Let me describe Mr. Warner, the superintendent of the sheep station. I do so chiefly to show what effect change of climate and of occupation has upon the human race, so far as offspring is concerned. Mr. Warner stood about six feet two, and weighed about twelve stone. He was strong, active, lithe, and graceful in his movements. Neither the Life Guards nor the Blues could exhibit a handsomer or better-built or more erect specimen of a man. He was one of thirteen children. He had seven brothers, all of whom were as tall as, if not taller than, himself; and five sisters, whose average height was five feet eleven and a half. Mr. Warner's father was one of the most miserable-looking little men I ever beheld, and his mother proportionately diminutive. The former had been a clerk in a mercantile house in the city of London, and at twenty-two years of age had become "unfortunate," that is to say, he was convicted of embezzlement, and transported for seven years. His young wife followed him to the colony, succeeded in getting him "assigned" to her, and they became

farmers in the interior. Thrifty to the last degree, they were very prosperous, and reared their large family in the most respectable and praiseworthy manner. The old man was reputed to be worth 40,000*l.*; but as soon as his sons were old enough he invariably sent them abroad in the colony to earn their own living, and make their own way in the world.

I had seen so much of sheep-washing and sheep-shearing in my life, that I had little or no interest in the operations; and after my third day at Booreea, I determined on having a day or two with the blacks in the bush, in order that I might have an opportunity of observing their habits, customs, and mode of living in their thoroughly wild state. There happened to be a tribe encamped some four miles off, and I sent a shepherd to summon several of the leading men to attend upon me. They came. I made known to them my desire, and they seemed perfectly willing to gratify it. That afternoon, I caused to be stowed in a bag a damper, weighing ten pounds; and a piece of salt beef, weighing five pounds; and a piece of salt pork, weighing four pounds; some tea and brown sugar, two tin pannikins, a knife and fork, and iron spoon, a wooden platter, and a bottle of rum. Thus provisioned, I had my blanket wrapped up; and, armed with a double-barrelled fowling-piece, and a plentiful supply of powder and shot, I walked forth, at the head of the tribe, which consisted of about twenty men, nine women, and sixteen children, of various ages, from thirteen years to three weeks old.

The men were, for the most part, well-built and muscular; and so were the women. The only clothing that they wore was that which Nature dictates, even to the savage, ought not to be dispensed with. It was formed of a number of strips of opossum skin, about a foot and four inches long, and was fastened to a girdle tied round the loins. The girdle is a cord, which the black women ("gins," as they are called) make with their fingers out of the inner

and stringy barks of the trees. They also make nets, for carrying their light burdens in, out of this bark. The black *man* seldom or never carries any burden, save his spear and boomerang,—or a shield and a waddy (a club of about fifteen inches long, and made of very heavy and very hard wood). The whole of the tribe with which I was roving in the wilds were thus armed, and one or two of them had small tomahawks of European, or rather colonial, manufacture. The tomahawk, which a black fellow prizes, is an instrument about five inches long, two inches wide, and three-quarters of an inch thick. With the aid of this weapon he will rapidly ascend a tree twelve yards in circumference, and whose first branches are fifty feet from the ground. He can perform this feat with the aid of a sharp-pointed stone, fastened to the end of a short stick; but it takes him a longer time than with a tomahawk.

At sundown we were some five milcs distant from the station, and in the heart of as beautiful a forest as ever was seen. Here we halted, and the camp was formed. The first thing that a black man does is to light a fire. He finds two pieces of dry wood, and rubs them together so rapidly that, in less than ten minutes, ignition takes place. Some dry leaves, dry grass, and a few rotten sticks feed the flame, and ere long there are fires in all directions. The next thing is to form a shelter. With the tomahawk they strip, from the gigantic trees, sheets of bark eight feet long by six feet wide, and with three of these sheets of bark a hut is formed. Food is the next consideration. Where we then were, the opossum and the flying squirrel were the only animals within reach. To procure these, two savages ascended a lofty tree—an old tree—with hollow branches, broken at the outer ends. In these branches the animals abide. The one savage stations himself at the end of the hollow branch, tomahawk in hand, but so concealed that the opossum cannot see him. The other savage, with his tomahawk, strikes the other end of the branch, and goes on

tapping and hammering till the affrighted animals attempt to escape, when they are killed and fall to the earth. A sufficient number procured, they are equitably apportioned, and each mess (generally three men and their wives and children) proceed to cook their food. The animals are thrown upon the fire, hair and all. Skinning is considered not only unnecessary, but a waste. When the opossum or other animal bursts, or "pops," with the heat of the fire, he is "done," and pulled off. The men then sit down and eat him, throwing over their shoulders, every now and then, a morsel for their wives and children. From this, the reader will glean that the savage of New Holland is not a particularly gallant person.

Before composing themselves to sleep, the black fellows like their song, in which they all join in the chorus—men, women, and children. In fact, they sing themselves to sleep. To the civilized ear, there is not so much of melody as of vigour and sameness in their compositions, which relate chiefly to war and women.

The male savage—the adult—when asleep, is a perfect study. Albeit he has a bark hut to shelter him, he prefers lying near the fire on the bare earth. He lies on the broad of his back, his arms extended above his head, and his legs stretched out to their extremest length. His slumber, if I may be permitted to use the phrase, is truly rhapsodical. He does not snore, and his breathing is as light as that of an infant. The women, on the contrary, sleep in a sitting position, their arms enfolding their ankles, and their heads resting on their knees. The children lie with their stomachs on the earth. I have seen the adult males sleeping profoundly in the manner above described, with a burning sun shining on their faces, and countless mosquitoes and ants settled on their carcases, and deriving aliment from their skins, without disturbing them. I have also seen them thus sleep on during a terrific thunderstorm and a very heavy downfall of rain.

Some of the tribes in Australia will not search for food till driven to do so by the direst hunger, and when gorged will sleep for several days and nights consecutively; but many tribes—and the tribe I was roaming with was one of them—eat and sleep at something approaching regular intervals.

It was past ten o'clock. All the camp was now wrapped in repose, and, enveloping myself in my blanket, I threw myself on a sheet of bark, and with my jacket spread over a small log of wood for a pillow, I dropped off, and slept as soundly as possible.

And thus ended the first day of my sojourn with the blacks.

* * * * *

The savage of New Holland is not addicted to early rising. Like the author of the essays, "Elia," he does not appreciate the maxim that we should go to sleep with the lamb, and rise with the lark. The sun is well up in the heavens before he opens his eyes, sits on his haunches, runs his fingers through his long hair, and stares around him with a vacant expression of countenance.

It was nine o'clock on the morning of my second day before my black companions were all awakened from their slumbers, and then they began to chatter—men, women, and children—like so many magpies. I did not understand what they said, but their language was wonderfully musical; it was so full of vowels. Their voices also were of a sweet tone. In his savage state, the native of New Holland never keeps any provender in store, and is indifferent about breakfast. Indeed, he rarely eats until long past twelve o'clock, and prefers the evening as the time to take his one meal per diem.

I was bent upon travelling due south, and shaped my course by consulting occasionally a small compass which I carried in my waistcoat pocket. It was a quarter past ten before we were fairly on the march, and we travelled at

the rate of about three miles an hour, the women carrying the young children on their backs. We had not journeyed far when one of the blacks pointed to a spot upon the ground, and gave me to understand that it was the fresh imprint of a kangaroo's foot. I signified a desire to go in pursuit of the animal. A signal for silence was then made, and we proceeded cautiously, some of the blacks tracking the kangaroo, others keeping a look-out ahead. Presently one of the party espied the animal quietly feeding near a patch of brushwood. I had often heard of the blacks spearing a kangaroo, but I had never witnessed it. Their mode of proceeding was this:—They surrounded and hemmed in the prey, each man with his spear poised. The kangaroo—the most timid of creatures—as soon as he caught sight of one of his pursuers bounded off in the opposite direction, and came down towards where I was standing with a small party of the tribe. When he came within sixty yards of us, and was on the bound, three spears were thrown at him. One missed him; the other two went through his body and killed him on the spot. One of the women wanted the skin, and it was stripped off and given to her. The only fat upon the kangaroo—and that seldom weighs more than two ounces—is found upon the root of the tail. With this the blacks greased their foreheads and hair. I signified to them by gestures that they should take some of the flesh; but they answered, by gestures, that there was no occasion for so doing, as there were more to be had. And in this they were correct, for we came across no less than eleven within the next two hours; but as I was anxious to push on, and get into regions where the foot of civilized man had never trod, we did not go in pursuit of them.

We now came upon the most beautiful scenery imaginable. It was not grand, but picturesque. Here and there were purling streams of very clear water meandering over pebbles, and through little rocks of limestone. The trees which skirted the valley were not lofty, but beautifully

shaped, and their foliage of the richest, darkest green. In their branches were parrots of every size and plumage. It is no exaggeration to say I might have shot thousands of them; but I was reserving my ammunition for other game—the bronze-winged pigeon, the wild duck and the swan. But beautiful as was the scene, its sameness—like that of the lower range of the Himalaya mountains—began to pall upon me. Every hill, every bend in the stream, every valley, every clump of trees—the one was so like the other; and I was not sorry when we came upon a scene of a very different character.

We were now steering due south over gray limestone rocks. In some of these rocks were caverns of incalculable extent. I had brought with me several pieces of candle, in order that if I could not sleep at night I might read the only book I carried—namely, a duodecimo volume, containing all the stories in the Arabian Nights. There was not a particle of vegetation in the region we were then exploring, not a dry stick to be had, and I was obliged to have recourse to my gun for the purpose of procuring a light. This I effected by drawing the charge of shot from one of the barrels, ramming down over the powder a piece of rag, and then discharging the piece. The candle lighted, I entered one of these caverns with several of the blacks, and looked around me. From the smoothness of the walls, the level of the floors, and the arched roofs, one might almost fancy they had been excavated by the hand of man. We penetrated the cavern with extreme caution, for in some, if not all of them, there are openings in the floor which lead to caverns beneath. An enterprising traveller once, with the aid of lanterns and a rope ladder, went down to a third tier, and declared that there were other tiers beneath. In a word, these caverns may be mentioned as amongst the wonders of the world. They resemble in some respects the catacombs of Malta, only they are on a grander scale, and are the work of nature, not of art. I did not

penetrate more than thirty or forty yards. I confess I was too nervous to lose sight of the aperture or opening, through which in the distance glimmered the light of day; for had a vampyre or a bat, the sole occupants of these miraculous abodes, extinguished the flame, as they did in the case of the traveller who was compelled to use lanterns, most probably the ingenuity of the savage could not have rescued me from that awful darkness which prevailed beyond the spot on which I then stood. Never shall I forget the scene in that cavern: the five naked savages, each armed with his spear and boomerang, myself in thoroughly bush-attire, holding in my hand that piece of bullock-fat candle; the stillness, the darkness which the light had but feebly dispelled! Oh! how gratifying to my sight was the glorious glaring light of day, and the sun's scorching rays, when I left the damp cold air of that mysterious cavern!

Onward we went. It was now three o'clock, and I was becoming rather fatigued and anxious—anxious lest we should not cross the limestone ridge before nightfall. The monotony of these rocks, which were all alike in shape and colour, palled upon my sight even more than the monotony which, in the first instance, they had relieved. At five o'clock, however, we came upon a plain, or extensive valley, skirted by gigantic gum-trees in full flower—a whitish, sweet-smelling flower, filled with honey, upon which the parrots and other birds feed. At the further end of the plain was a large sheet of water, or lagoon, upon which there were myriads of wild ducks and black swans. Gun in hand, and followed by the blacks, who had their boomerangs ready to throw on the flight of the birds, I approached the edge of the water; but before I could get within 150 yards of them they were all on the wing, and after flying for at least a quarter of an hour, very high in the air, they at last settled down in the centre of the lagoon, and far beyond the reach of my fowling-piece.

I pointed to the ducks, and then in dumb show went

through the operation of eating. They comprehended my meaning immediately, and without being indebted to Colonel Hawker, or any other great sportsman, for the idea, they at once devised the means of putting me within gunshot of the game. They stripped from one of the gigantic trees two sheets of bark, each twenty feet long by ten wide. These they constructed into canoes, and lashed them together with strips of the kangaroo skin. In the bows of the canoes, and in fact all round them, they placed small branches of trees and leafy boughs, so that I might be concealed, and the moving mass, taken for a tree, inspire the birds with no alarm. The wind happened to blow lightly from the spot where we stood, and as soon as the rude "bark" was launched it began to glide across the lagoon at the rate of about two miles an hour. In about ten minutes I was within fifty yards of the ducks, which covered a space of at least one acre. They rose. Such a mass! I discharged first one barrel and then the other. Nine birds fell, four killed and five wounded, all of which we picked up. That was the first time these ducks had ever heard the report of a gun, or had been disturbed. As we could not pull back, we suffered the flotilla to cross the lagoon, and landed on the opposite side. Forasmuch as numbers of ducks uprose at our approach, I conjectured that there were nests in the vicinity; and I was right in my conjecture, for I might have brought away a cart-load of eggs instead of a couple of dozens. We then left the flotilla, and walked round to the point whence we had started. By the time we arrived, the camp was formed, and the fires lighted. One of the ducks I skinned and grilled on some very live coals for my own dinner, and excellent eating it was. The remainder I gave to the blacks, who cooked them and ate them in the same way as they had cooked and eaten the opossums. They threw them on the fire, feathers and all, and when they "popped" they took them off and devoured *every morsel of them*.

Weary with the day's journey, I retired to rest at an early hour—half-past nine—and slept till daylight, when I arose and determined on walking round the lake in search of a swan. I did my best to waken one of the men, but to no purpose; he was much too fast asleep. I poked him in the chest with a stick; I kicked him in the ribs, and shouted out his name—"Kooldaree;" I placed a piece of burning rag close to his nostrils; I pulled his hair with my forefinger and thumb; I made a noose with a piece of string, placed it round his great toe, and tugged at it. All was useless. Had he been under the influence of chloroform, or in a mesmeric trance, he could not have slept on more profoundly. I was therefore compelled to go alone in my ramble. There was no chance of my being lost, for even had I lost sight of the smoke issuing from the camp, the blacks, on missing me, would soon have "tracked" me up and found me. (With their wonderful power of tracking, the reader is of course acquainted.) I saw several swans, but they were so fearfully shy that I could not get within gun-shot of them. The ducks which I had seen on the previous evening were again settled in the centre of the lagoon; but without assistance I was unable to launch the "bark;" and had I done so, I question whether a second expedition in that quarter would have been attended with success. I fell in with a brace of emus, and might have shot them easily; but it was not worth my while to do so, and I returned empty handed.

Having breakfasted on hard-boiled ducks' eggs, a crust of damper, and some weak rum-and-water, and the camp being in readiness to start, off we went "due south." After travelling for about three hours, we came upon the most dense forest I ever beheld, and so thick was the brushwood in some parts that it was almost impenetrable. The forest swarmed with quail and wild pigeon, chiefly of the bronze-wing species. The former got up in such numbers, close to our feet, that the blacks for awhile amused themselves

by throwing their waddies in every covey and killing numbers of them. In this forest also there were the largest ant-hills, or ant-houses, that I have ever beheld. Some of them were seven or eight feet high, and built of mud, which had become as hard as stone. The ants were at least an inch long, and resembled in shape the large black ant of the upper provinces of the East Indies. Out of curiosity I caused one of these edifices, which had been deserted, to be broken into, and was amazed at the ingenuity and skill displayed in its construction. The blacks gave me to understand that it would have been very dangerous to have molested an inhabited hill, as the occupants would attack us in swarms, pursue us for miles, and, if they caught us, destroy us. Here and there in the forest were to be seen small patches of sunlight, but, as a whole, it may be faithfully described as being in *perpetual shade*. Nearly all the wild trees in Australia are evergreens. Once more I was oppressed with the monotony of the scene, and panted for a change. It was not, however, until past four o'clock that we came into a different line of country, and found ourselves at the foot of a long and low belt of rocky mountains, some two thousand feet above the level of the forest. These mountains were wooded, but not thickly, and the trees were not very tall. At an altitude of about eight hundred feet, I resolved on halting for the night upon a piece of table-land comprising some four or five acres. The scenery was "very pretty," but that is all that could be said of it. For me its charm, in those days, was the reflection—*This spot the eye of civilized man has never seen. His steps were never on thy sward.* Yet, apart from the scenery, there was much food for contemplation around me. How came those pieces of crystal, sparkling like huge diamonds in the sun's rays, to be scattered about in all directions? What is the meaning of these shells on these rocks several hundred miles from the coast? Has the sea ever been here? And was that dense forest once a bed of the ocean?

Were there once shoals of fish where the quail now build their nests? While busied in these [not very original] reflections, the blacks were providing the means of shelter for me and for themselves. There were no sheets of bark in that region; but they cut down some saplings, with prongs at the ends, and with these and some boughs they constructed a tenement, resembling a summer-house or arbour, capable of keeping out the wind and the dew; and upon the rocks they lighted the fires. Meanwhile, the women and some of the elder children went in search of water, and returned with it. That for me they brought in the tin pannikin; that for themselves in bags made out of the skins of kangaroos. We were in no difficulty in respect to food: with pigeons and large parrots the place abounded, and in twenty minutes I shot more than would have sufficed for a much larger number of people. The blacks, too, did considerable execution amongst them with their boomerangs and waddies. Upon the rock on which my fire was lighted, having brushed away the coals, I roasted my tender pigeon, and never devoured a more delicious morsel in my life.

Just before the camp retired to rest that night, there arose a quarrel between two of the men. The horrible cause of the strife was jealousy touching one of the women. The savage of New Holland is—

“One not easily jealous,
But being wroth, perplex’d i’ the extremo.”

At first their warfare was merely of a wordy nature; but at length one of the disputants—the aggrieved party—sprang up, handed his waddy to the supposed evil-doer, and then bent his head forward, placing his hands over his knees—putting himself, in short, in the attitude of a man giving a “back” at the game of leap-frog. The other party seized the waddy, and dealt the aggrieved party such a blow on the top of the head, that had his skull not been twice as thick as that of a European, his brains would have been battered in. As it was, he only reeled a little

—he was stunned for a minute or so. By-the-way, the blood flowed freely down his face, and rendered him a ghastly spectacle. As soon as the other party delivered his blow he threw the waddy on the ground, and presented *his* cranium to his antagonist, in the posture already described. “Whack!” descended the waddy, with awful force, producing the effect which a reporter of a prize-fight would describe in the columns of “Bell’s Life” as “groggy,” while the blood flowed in several small streams, and saturated his bushy hair. He was not long, however, before he came to time, seized the waddy, and gave his second blow—another stunner; but not sufficient to finish the fight, which continued until each party had received no less than seven blows, and the supposed evil-doer had fallen to the earth, and was unable to pick up the waddy. He lay on the flat of his back, his arms and legs extended as in his sleep. I thought he was dead, but I was mistaken. In less than two hours he revived, sat up, drank some water, and ate his supper. And what struck me as the strangest part of the whole proceeding, the late foes seemed perfectly reconciled to each other, and, if possible, better friends than ever.

I had seen the miserable blacks, in the vicinity of Sydney and Paramatta, when maddened by ardent spirits—administered to them by European blackguards—kick, bite, scratch, and tear each other’s hair, screaming like demons all the while; but this was the first really aboriginal duel that I had witnessed. I cannot say that the sight afforded me any satisfaction; on the contrary. But I could not help admiring the extreme fairness which characterized the encounter; while the chivalrous cessation of every hostile feeling when the battle was over inspired me with some respect for this phase of savage nature.

That night there was a birth in the camp. I had no idea that such an event was so near at hand, and knew nothing about it until next morning, when I saw the child

—a little boy—at his mother's breast. Fearing that she would be too fatigued to travel, I suggested a halt, but the blacks only laughed and shook their heads; and at ten o'clock we were again on the move—the woman carrying her new-born and perfectly naked babe in a net, which was fastened round her neck, and hung half-way down her back. There it lay—coiled up like a little squirrel. From inquiries which I made subsequently, I learnt that the aboriginal women very rarely die in childbirth, and that the ravages of death amongst the children are nothing like so great as amongst the children of civilized people. They have none of those contagious diseases to which our children are subject. No whooping-cough, no measles, no “thrush,” no scarlet fever, no cow, chicken, or small-pox—no over-anxious mothers, no attentive medical men (not that I intend to speak disparagingly of the profession); and from my own personal knowledge I am enabled to state that they cut their teeth without having their gums lanced, and without any medicine to assist Nature in that painful, but simple, operation.

XIII.

MUSIC A TERROR.

My recollections of Australia relate to some years back, long before the colony had a legislative assembly or a free press; long before emigration had carried to its shores shoals of men and women “unconnected with the crown;” long before gold was discovered in the district of Bathurst, or Sir Thomas Mitchell had explored that vast tract of country called by him “Australia Felix.” I write, indeed, of those times still spoken of by some as “those good old times,” when the assignment system prevailed, and Government were glad to get rid of their convicts to masters who would feed, clothe, and work them; when “summary pun-

ishments" were the order of the day, and every gentleman was his own magistrate; when the quartern loaf sold for half-a-crown, and beef and mutton for three-halfpence a pound; when the value of a hogshead of rum was 200*l.*, and an acre of land five shillings; when money could not be borrowed, even upon good security, for less than thirty per cent. per annum.

In those good old times, I had, in partnership with a gentleman who managed it, a cattle station about 120 miles from Sydney, at a place called Bong-Bong. My partner had formerly held an ensign's commission in the 73rd regiment of his late Majesty George III.; but shortly after his arrival in the colony he had fallen in love with a very handsome girl of humble birth, whom he married, and then retired from the army, took a grant of land, and "settled" permanently in New South Wales.

My friend and partner, Mr. Romer, was blessed with a numerous offspring—seven sons and four daughters. The eldest was a boy of fourteen, and the youngest a baby "in arms." They were all remarkably fine children, strong, healthy, and intelligent; but they were uncultivated, of course—like the wilds in the midst of which they had been born and bred. The only white people whom they had ever seen were their parents, the convict servants (some twenty in number), and sundry stray visitors and stockmen who happened occasionally to pass the station and require shelter for the night. Nor had their children ever seen any buildings beyond the mud and slab house in which they lived, and the bark huts occupied by the servants. Nor had they seen pictures or prints save those to be found in the old-fashioned spelling-books, by the aid of which Mrs. Romer, in her few leisure moments, had taught the elder children to read. The only music they had ever heard was that which a very rude fife discoursed, when played upon by a hut-keeper; and the only airs that he could compass were "God Save the King," "Rule Britannia,"

and “Poor Mary Anne.” Neither Romer nor his wife had much “ear” for melody, and never did more than *hum* the words of some old song.

It was my wont to visit the cattle station once a year, and upon every occasion I used to take with me a variety of presents for my young friends in the bush. Toys, such as tin-barrelled guns, brass watches, Dutch dolls, various wooden animals in deal boxes, &c.: of these they had grown tired, and it now became with me a matter of great difficulty to get anything likely to please and amuse them. One morning while walking up George Street, Sydney [the houses in George Street were in those days all detached residences, standing in their own grounds], I observed an unusually large crowd in front of the auction mart. Curiosity prompted me to ascertain what was the object of attraction. It was nothing short of “A piano—to be sold by auction to the highest bidder. Terms, cash; or an approved bill at three months, bearing interest at 25 per cent.”

There was not at that time more than five pianos in the colony, and *this* piano was considered by far the best, inasmuch as it had once belonged to Mrs. Macquarie, the wife of Major-General Lauchlan Macquarie, Governor of New South Wales and its dependencies. At the sale of the general’s effects, when he was going home, it had been purchased by the provost-marshal, whose necessities subsequently compelled him to part with it to a Jew, who exchanged it with an officer who particularly desired it for an allotment of land containing eleven acres on the Surrey hills, near the old race-course, a part of which allotment of land has since realized upwards of 20,000*l.* To trace the old piano through the different hands into which it afterwards fell would be no easy matter. Let it suffice that it was now the property of a butcher, with whom I had frequent dealings, and who bought periodically the fat bullocks which we reared at the cattle station under Captain Romer’s

superintendence [I say *Captain*, because every one called him Captain Romer].

It may be as well to describe the instrument now about to be submitted to public competition. It was three feet two inches long, and two feet wide. Its mahogany case had become almost black, and its once white keys were now as yellow as the claws of a kite. The legs were rather rickety; and constant use and frequent removal had greatly impaired and weakened the tone, which, in the infancy of the instrument, had never been very powerful. However, it was a piano, nevertheless; and there was "all Sydney" waiting to see it sold, and half of those present ready to bid for it.

An auction-room—like love and death—levels all ranks; and on that day were to be seen government officials, merchants who had come out "free," merchants who had originally come out "bond" [emancipist], traders, wealthy farmers, Jews, *et hoc genus omne*, straining and jostling to get a sight of, and close to, this (in the words of the auctioneer) "eligible opportunity of introducing 'armony in the buzzim of a family circle."

Amongst the crowd was a Frenchman, whose ignorance of the English law relating to chattels (he had "taken" some valuables belonging to another person) had led to his being furnished with a passage to Botany Bay. This Frenchman had been a teacher of music in London, and, at the request of the auctioneer, he "favoured the company" with a few pieces of music, and thus spared the auctioneer—so he said—the trouble of "hewlogizing the instrument—since it could speak for itself." Had pianos been common in New South Wales, silence on the part of this one would have been more prudent, so far as the interests of the owner were concerned.

No sooner did I witness the delight which the cracked tones of that old piano afforded to so many of the bystanders, than I made up my mind—was determined—to become

its purchaser. I was certain that I should be vehemently opposed on all sides; but I did not care about that, especially as I knew that my friend, the butcher, would have no objection to be paid in cattle instead of coin. I need scarcely say that it was not for myself that I wanted the old piano, although I could play a little; it was for the children of my friend and partner, Romer—whose surprise I longed to witness, when they saw me touch the keys and produce a sound—that I craved for the ownership of that antique instrument.

After a brief while, when the Frenchman had ceased to edify the throng, the bidding commenced. “What shall we say, gentlemen, for this elegant instrument?” the auctioneer enquired. “Start it at what you please; 150*l.* if you like.”

“Fifty!” said a voice in the crowd.

A roar of laughter followed this ridiculous appreciation of an instrument—a piano—that once belonged to Mrs. Macquarie, while the auctioneer, with an expression of face which plainly betokened how deeply his feelings had been hurt, remarked, very solemnly: “Those people who come here to joke had better wait till the sale’s over, and not interrupt business.” Eventually, it was “started” at 100*l.*, but it was very soon run up to 130*l.* Here it stopped for a while, and I nodded my head. “140*l.*—140*l.*!” cried the auctioneer, who refused to take any bid under 10*l.* A very brisk competition now ensued between several individuals, and I remained silent, though unshaken in my resolve.

The piano was now “going for 175*l.*—going for 175*l.*,—once—twice—third, and the —.” I nodded my head.

“185*l.*—185*l.*!” said the auctioneer.

There was “no advance” for some minutes, and I was in hopes that I should get it for that last bid of mine, but I was mistaken. A gentleman known as Billy Hatcherson—an expatriated highwayman—a very wealthy man, wanted it for one of his daughters, who was about to be married,

and he roared out, in a very defiant manner, "200*l.*—there!" and confident that it would be his, he left the room triumphantly, and went "over the way" to refresh himself with a glass of grog.

Another spirited competition now took place, and eventually the piano became my property at 250*l.*

I was quite right in my conjecture that the butcher would be glad to take cattle in payment, and, before leaving the auction, we concluded a bargain. I was to deliver to him within three months from that date, seventy fat oxen, such as I had previously sold to him.

In the days of which I am writing there were no post-offices in New South Wales, much less public carriers, and I had to wait several weeks before I could find a dray going to any station within forty miles of Captain Romer's abode (settlers usually accommodated each other by carrying packages to and from the interior), and it was not until after I had myself arrived at the station, that Romer received the news of "a large box for him at the station of Major Belrington," another retired officer who had settled in the wilds of Australia.

The despatch of the piano I had kept a secret, and when Romer heard of this "large box," he could not comprehend it, for he had ordered nothing, and expected nothing, from Sydney. He sent off, however, a cart drawn by a pair of bullocks, and on the third day the large box arrived. "With great care," was painted on the lid; and with *very* great care it was removed from the cart and placed in the verandah.

The advent of a package, and the opening thereof, was always a great event at the station, even when it was expected. There would be seen Romer, with a mallet and chisel in his hands, ready to break into it, no matter whether it was a cask of sugar, a chest of tea, or a case full of slop clothing for the men, while Mrs. Romer, with the youngest child in her arms, might be seen dividing her anxiety touching the condition of the stores with her fears for the child-

ren's safety—for they would all flock round their father, and frequently go much too close to the implements in his hands. But here was a *special* case—a most mysterious box. Romer said he had dreamt that some of his relations in England had sent him an assortment of saddlery, which would have been particularly acceptable ; and he was hoping in his heart that “saddlery,” it would turn out. Mrs. Romer had also a dream—that her father had sent a large box of clothing for herself and the children, and she was hoping for the realization of *her* dream. It would be in vain to attempt a description of the surprise and disgust of Romer and his excellent wife when they beheld the old piano.

“ Such a useless thing ! ” said Romer.

“ Who could have sent it ? ” said his wife.

While they were thus expressing themselves, the whole of their children, each in a different key, were shouting out—

“ Papa ! Ma ! What’s a piano ? what’s a piano ? ”

I laughed so heartily at the scene, that both Romer and his wife were perfectly satisfied that I had something to do with “the joke”—for as such they regarded the appearance of a piano in that Australian wilderness ; and at last I confessed to them that I had bought the instrument for the amusement and instruction of their young ones.

The piano, which was locked and the key in my waistcoat pocket, had withstood all the attempts of the children to open it, in order to see what was inside ; and Romer and myself carefully carried it into the room wherein the family were accustomed to dine. (It may be needless, perhaps, to inform the reader that in those remote regions where Captain Romer resided “ drawing-rooms ” were dispensed with.)

I was just as impatient to witness the effect of music (such as the old piano was capable of) upon the children as were the children to see “What’s inside ! ” I therefore hastily unlocked it, and, placing my foot upon the pedal, swept the chords as vigorously as was prudent, considering the shaky state of the piano.

Alas! instead of delighting the children, I terrified them. Some ran out of the room, shrieking, "It's alive! it's alive!" others stood aghast with their mouths wide open. One of the little boys fancied the keys were a row of huge teeth, which would bite me if I continued to touch them; whilst a little girl of four years of age begged of her mamma not to let the baby go near it. The eldest girl, observing that the instrument was perfectly harmless, was approaching my side, but was violently pulled back by two of her brothers. Presently, those who had run away returned to the door, and finding that there was no real danger, re-entered the room. By degrees the whole of them were not only reconciled to the belief that the piano was inanimate, but vastly pleased with the tunes which I played upon it. Ere long they became both bold and familiar, and, approaching the old instrument, they dealt it several blows with their clenched fists, which, had they been repeated, would soon have silenced it for ever.

* * * * *

When the children had gone to bed—and it was a rather difficult matter to prevail upon them to retire, so maddened had they become with the sound of the music—I played several airs which in former days had been very familiar to the ears of Romer and his wife, but which they had not heard for upwards of sixteen years. Amongst others was "The Girl I left behind me," an air which the band of Romer's old regiment, the 73rd, used to play constantly on parade, when the regiment was marching past the colours.

When I had finished playing the air, I turned round, and said to Romer, "You remember that, don't you?"

What was my astonishment to find my friend in tears. The large drops were rolling down his sunburnt cheeks. "What is the matter?" I inquired of him.

"Ah, sir!" he replied, "you have brought back to me the morning when I embarked for this country and, when, for the last time, I saw my mother and sisters. That old

piano makes it seem as though it were only yesterday that I parted from them."

And Mrs. Romer was crying. *Why?* Because when she knew that Charley really loved her, and they were engaged to be married, she used to go every morning to see the old 73rd paraded, and kept her eyes upon the colours, which Charley, as junior ensign, used to carry when the regiment marched past them and played that old tune—"The Girl I left behind me." And a very happy air it was, and sweet to her ears; for shortly after it had ceased, Charley and herself had their morning meeting, and used to walk round the spot which was called "the Government domain." The tears that were shed by Romer and his wife were not tears of unhappiness; for, although they were not musical, their domestic life had never known a single discord.

"Play it again!" said Romer and his wife simultaneously—the latter now sitting on her husband's knees, her arm encircling his neck—"oh! play it again. Do, please!"

I obeyed them, but was soon interrupted by the children, who rushed from their beds to the dining-room, and began to dance, or rather to "jump about," in imitation of the gestures of the aborigines in the act of choral exercises. The boys were clothed only in their night-shirts; the girls in their bed-gowns; and to the best of their ability they followed the air I was playing with their voices. Such a scene! Had the old piano cost me double the number of the fat oxen I had contracted to give for it, I could not have grudged the price.

One of the house-dogs began to bark fiercely, and Romer went to the door, whence he saw the whole of the servants, attracted by the sound of the pianoforte, drawn up in line, and listening most attentively to the music. Romer, who was one of the most kind-hearted men that the world ever produced, entered completely into their feelings, and invited them to sit down in the verandah; and he sent them out two bottles of rum and several ounces of tobacco, where-

with to regale themselves, while the music was gladdening their souls, and carrying them back to scenes in the land which, in all probability, they would never again behold.

It was long after eleven o'clock before we retired to rest that night; and even then the children were frantic for "more noise," as they called it.

* * * * *

The next morning, soon after daylight, Romer came into my apartment, and, with a smile upon his face, said, "This old piano, it occurs to me, may be turned to very profitable account."

"How?" I inquired.

"We may make it an instrument of terror to the blacks. Of late they have become awfully troublesome in the matter of spearing the cattle, merely for the fat wherewith to grease themselves, and only last week we lost in this way a very valuable cow. I will send for some of the tribe and frighten them, or rather *you* must, by playing on the bass keys."

I liked the idea vastly. Besides, I was very curious to see the expression of a savage's face when, for the first time, he heard music.

The encampment of the blacks was only three or four miles distant, and a stockman was sent to bring several of them; and at noon, about eight or nine of them, in all their nudity, made their appearance. Mrs. Romer had a strong objection to admit them in or near the house, and so Romer and I carried the old piano out into the open space in front of the dwelling.

The aboriginal native of New Holland—just like the native of India—cannot help touching and examining everything that is strange to him; and no sooner did "the blacks" whom we summoned observe the old piano, than they moved towards and examined it very attentively. One of them at last opened the instrument, and touched the keys rather heavily, and (like Fear in the "Ode to the Pas-

sions ")), terrified at the sound he had produced, recoile backwards, his spear poised ready to be thrown, and h brilliant black eye firmly fixed on the demon, for as such h regarded the.old piano. His companions also poised the long spears, and retreated cautiously step by step.

Romer now begged of them not to be alarmed, and wit some little difficulty brought them back to the piano, whei he represented to them that inside was a fearful demon who would eat up the whole of their tribe if he were tol to do so; but that, if they did nothing to offend or anno him [Romer], they had nothing whatever to fear.

I corroborated this statement by nodding my head; and advancing to the instrument, I touched the keys and began to play as loudly as possible. Who shall describe their faces and their attitudes? Some of them grasped the boomerangs, others poised their spears ready to repel an sudden attack that the demon might make upon them. It wa a scene such as I would not have missed on any account.

When I had ceased playing, Romer explained to ther that I had been telling the demon what he was to do, o the next occasion of a bullock, a cow, or a calf bei speared on the run; and they must have believed ever word he said, for from that day forward the nuisance abated, and the tribe very rarely came near the fores where our cattle used to graze; so that the old piano, after all was by no means dear at the price I paid for it, to say nothin of the amusement which it afforded to Romer's children.

The old piano is still extant. Not long ago I had a lette from Romer, who is now both old and rich, in which h said: "There are thousands of pianos in the colony now of all sorts, sizes, and prices, from 25*l.* up to 100*l.*; but no for any one of them would we exchange our old friend here which has a place of honour in one of our drawing-rooms and reposes its tottering legs on a Turkey carpet."

THE END.

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